



Martin County CURRENTS

Volume 3 Issue 7 • December 2013

FREE

Santas come in all sizes!

Find out what's
happening this
holiday season!
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Sarah Heard

Maggy
Hurchalla

Ed Fielding

Hurchalla-Fielding email:
Is it skulduggery? Pg 8

The great-granddaughter
of Hobe Sound's
Mrs. Claus



Gifts galore at Port Salerno's
Fish House Art Gallery Pg 26



An ecological treasure awaits
discovery in Indiantown Pg 19

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7 A.M. TO
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Martin County CURRENTS

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The 2014 election season is officially upon us. The first candidates have



John Schierbaum

filed with the Martin County Elections Office for the 2014 election. Republican John Schierbaum of Sterling Circle in Stuart will seek the District 2 County Commission seat now held by Ed Fielding, and Tina Maria McSoley of

Gregor Way in Stuart will seek the District 4 School Board seat currently held by Maura Barry-Sorenson.

Schierbaum may be a familiar face to some who watch the Board of County Commissioners meetings on MCTV. He has been a frequent public speaker during those meetings to protest the county's involvement with the 7/50 planning process for a number of weeks.

"I made the decision to run for office because I don't like the direction some of our county commissioners want to take Martin County," he said in an email, "specifically by participating in Seven50. I want to keep Martin County, Martin County. I am strongly against unelected regional bureaucrats telling us in Martin County how to live our lives."

He and his wife, Penelope, moved from New Jersey to Martin County five years, and is an nuisance alligator trapper licensed by the Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission and a volunteer tour guide for the Florida Oceanographic Society for the past four years. ■

Two counties already have withdrawn from the 50-year regional

plan for seven south Florida counties, known as the Seven50 Plan, and it looks like Martin County will follow Indian River and St. Lucie counties soon as citizen protests continue to intensify at every county commission meeting.

The stated objective of the plan, a joint project of the South Florida and Treasure Coast regional planning councils, is to provide a "blueprint" for the future of the region that balances economic, environmental and social demands by indentifying industries and issues that will need to be addressed over the next 50 years.

Areas include the environment, agriculture, education, economic growth, development, community assets and climate change, but what has alarmed many residents are the plans for "social engineering" to bring greater equality in

continued on page 4

at The Lyric

#1 New York Times and world-wide bestselling mystery and suspense author

A Conversation with **Mary Higgins Clark**

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LyricTheatre.com HISTORIC DOWNTOWN STUART 772-286-7827

continued from PAGE 3

housing at the apparent loss of individual property rights, as well as the spectre of zoning and quality-of-life decisions being made by government bureaucrats rather than elected officials.

The \$4.25 million cost of the Seven50 Plan is being paid by the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development's Sustainable Communities Initiative, and over the past two years, the Southeast Florida Regional Partnership has collected input and data from public summits, workshops, online outreach and various studies.

Marcela Cambler-Cotsaimanis, director of the Seven50 plan, appeared before the Martin County commission in October with the first draft of the plan for review, explaining that the county has the option "to pick and choose" whatever it wishes to incorporate in the county's Comp Plan, and discard the rest.

The most committed supporters of the Seven50 plan among the commissioners are Ed Fielding and Doug Smith, both saying that the plan is voluntary, not mandatory, but most important, it provides an opportunity for Martin County to have a say in how the region will develop, ordinarily difficult for a county as small as Martin.

"There are going to be changes in the future," Commissioner Fielding said. "We want to participate in the decision-making process so we'll have some say in what happens and so we'll be able to take advantage of opportunities, like extend-

ing fiber-optic cable throughout the region....that's vital."

The commissioners agreed to hear both sides of the issue, at Commissioner Anne Scott's urging, to put Seven50 on the agenda, preferably in December, giving each side 20 minutes to make a presentation, after which the commissioners will vote either to withdraw completely, or to continue to participate in the long-range planning process. ■

Attorney Robert Raynes Jr., representing Midbrook 1st Realty

Midbrook 1st Realty, owners of the 2,800-acre Hobe Grove planned community in western Martin County, urged the county to delay the public hearing on the 2nd set of Comprehensive Plan Amendments until after the challenges to the first set of rewrites are heard, since many of the second set of rewrites simply bring other chapters of the Martin County Comprehensive Plan into compliance with the new changes.

"We ask that you not adopt the New Amendments and, instead, pause, reflect on the implications and consider the detrimental impacts on Martin County and its citizens as a whole," he said, in his letter. "It would be beneficial

to wait until the present challenges are resolved, instead of attempting to adopt, separate from those challenges, the New Amendments that would create more litigation, more cost, and be detrimental to anyone involved."

The county disagreed, and a public hearing to adopt the 2nd Set Comprehensive Plan Amendments has been set for 9 a.m. on Tuesday, Dec. 10. Changes will be made to Chapters 14, 8, 9, and 15 and will include modifications to shoreline protection zones, wetlands definitions, a diagram as part of the Airport Master Plan, to eliminate references to the Business Development Board and Convention and Visitors Bureau from the comprehensive plan, and to outline new policies regarding economic and tourist development.

The Growth Management Department staff reports for the plan amendments can be downloaded from www.martin.fl.us/portal/page?_pageid=355,4439276&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL. Public comment, email or US mail, should be addressed to Nicki van Vonno, AICP, Growth Management Department Director, at nikkiv@martin.fl.us.

No date has been set as yet to hear the four legal challenges to the first set of Comp Plan amendments by landowners that include farmers and ranchers, as well as the Hobe Grove development, although the cases, which have been combined, are expected to be heard in early spring, according to Raynes. ■

The South Florida Water Management District's new executive director,

Blake Guillory, notified the Martin County Growth Management Department in November that it was "satisfied" with the county's rewording of parts of the 1st set of Comprehensive Plan Amendments in Chapters, 1, 2 and 4 regarding water resources management.

The South Florida Water Management District, one of the state reviewing agencies, had written a strong letter of objection to the Comp Plan rewrites on Sept. 18 to the state Department of Economic Opportunity, urging the department take action against the county for overstepping its authority to manage the district's water resources.

In response, the county Growth Management department director Nicki van Vonno notified the SFWMD that it was not Martin County's intention "to transgress" the District's authority to regulate consumptive water use permitting, thus rewriting the text of the amendments, which will be presented to the commission on Dec. 10, along with the 2nd set of Comp Plan amendments, for commission approval.

The revised Comp Plan amendment text now reads: "Seasonal water tables shall be preserved, protected, and/or enhanced. The County shall use its land use authority under FS 163 to ensure that land use decisions shall not result in the

reduction of the normal seasonal wetland water levels. Implementation of this policy shall include the CGMP (Comprehensive Growth Management Plan) and the Land Development Regulations and shall not transgress the SFWMD's authority under state law to regulate consumptive use permitting." ■

Reacting to the County Commission's recent decision



Jacqueline Lewis, President Martin County Hotel Motel Association

to dissolve the Convention and Visitors Bureau and hand over those responsibilities to the county's Parks and Recreation Department, the members of the Martin County Hotel Motel Association decided at its Nov. 11 meeting to extend an invitation to other "tourist partners" to join their association.

"We are at a critical juncture," said Jacqueline Lewis, president of the Hotel Motel Association and general manager of the Courtyard Marriott in Stuart.

"None of us can simply just wait around and see what happens as the county takes over the promotion of tourism," she said. "We need to reach out to restaurants and attractions and to all those places that depend on tourism, so we can work together to make the most of our marketing efforts."

Lewis, who has been general manager since the Marriott opened in 2009, has received some of the highest of the chain's awards, including general manager of the year. Her hotel maintenance team ranked fourth out of 821 properties in 2011, and she also earned one of only three "Diamond General Manager of the Year" awards out of 915 Courtyard by Marriott hotels in the Americas in 2012.

Lewis invited Brandy Hastings, manager of marketing and sales for VisitFlorida.com, to attend, bringing members up-to-date on statewide tourism initiatives. She provided current marketing materials, and urged all hotels, motels, restaurants, and attractions to sign up for a free website listing on VisitFlorida.com, developed for visitors to plan their Florida vacations.

The listing includes the business name, contact information, an interactive Google map, a hyperlink to the business's website and one photo to display on the profile page. For more information, Hastings can be reached via email at bhastings@VisitFlorida.org, or sign up for the tourism blog at SunshineMatters.org.

She encouraged members also to contact her with ideas for places and events, such as the Christmas boat parades, that currently are not being marketed out of state so they may be included in the state Visit Florida marketing plan. ■

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MAR. 7-23

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Increasing the county's sales tax was put back on the agenda for

discussion during the Dec. 3 County Commission meeting, but no decision was made as to how much or how long the sales tax should be levied. One point was clear, however: a sales tax referendum of some kind will be on the ballot for November's general election.

It also seemed to be clear that whatever is decided by the commissioners will not be unanimous, other than the sales tax revenues should be used only for roads and bridge maintenance and repair, estimated now by the county engineering department as requiring \$250 million to retire its maintenance backlog.

"And we know this amount is going to go up," said Commissioner John Haddox, "probably by the day..."

Commissioner Ed Fielding also called for an additional rewrite of the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan that would "spell out" what would be acceptable projects for funding by the county commission, not just from sales tax revenues, but for all future revenues coming into county coffers, which would eliminate discretionary decisions by this and future commissions.

Any deviation from whatever projects would be deemed appropriate by the current board to be included in the Comp Plan, Fielding proposed, would require a super-majority vote of at least four of the five county commissioners.

Both Commissioners John Haddox and Anne Scott also wanted an in-depth review of the county's current Capital Improvement Expenditures budget and the Capital Expenditures Plan that were previously approved in order to determine what could be cut, if anything, before deciding the amount of sales tax and for what term is required to meet the county's needs.

County staff were directed to analyze the particular projects that could be completed with a half cent sales tax for three years, as well as a half cent tax for five years. They also were directed to prepare the language for the ordinance that will be placed on the November ballot, although without specific amounts as yet, and also to investigate what language could be incorporated into the Comp Plan to limit spending on specific projects. ■

Martin County Commissioners met in an "executive session" with their

attorney, Michael Durham, and administrator Taryn Kryzda to further discuss whether or not to forfeit pending payments to the county of court-ordered sanctions and attorney fees by the Martin County Conservation Alliance and 1,000 Friends of Florida, as well as by environmental attorney Richard Grosso, who

represented the two organizations in a failed lawsuit against the county.

Commissioner Doug Smith declined to meet in the closed-door session for the second time, telling the board he was "concerned" about violating the orders issued by the administrative law judge. He also did not participate in the first closed-door session in September.

The case against Martin County was originally filed in 2009 by Grosso, not only against Martin County, but also the state's former development review agency, the Florida Department of Community Affairs, and two private companies. They lost the case, then appealed the decision, although they had been advised by the administrative law judge not to do so.

The 1st District Court of Appeals refused to hear the case, writing that the plaintiffs "did not have standing," thus issuing the sanctions based on what the court said were "meritless appellate arguments."

No decision was announced after the closed-door session ended regarding whether or not the commissioners had decided to collect their court-ordered fees. The *Sunshine State News* online newspaper reported immediately after the meeting concluded that Commissioner Doug Smith said he expected the issue to be on the agenda for the next commission meeting, which is Dec. 10. ■

The Business Development Board of Martin County entered

into a new, revised contract with the county Dec. 3...kind of...with some loose ends still to be tied. The County Commission agreed to the length of the contract, which was shortened from 10 years to three years, the annual payments to support its operation, which come from license fees paid by businesses in Martin County, have been reduced from \$645,000 annually to \$430,000 the first year, \$350,000 the second year and \$260,000 in the third year; the number of board members has been reduced from 28 members to 15 with only one member representing the Economic Council, a private business development group; and with changes to the board structure that will now include each member of the county commission, either serving on the board, or appointing a Martin County resident to serve in their stead.

The commission will continue to appoint its own representative from the Board of County Commissioners, as well, which will continue to be Commissioner John Haddox. Commissioner Ed Fielding also appointed himself to serve on the BDB.

The organization, which no longer will be included in the Comprehensive Growth Management Plan, also may not carry over funds from one year to the next, and the Clerk of the Courts will provide oversight of its budget expenditures, according to Jeff Sabin, current BDB president.

Commissioner Anne Scott had suggested in November that the county should match up to \$100,000 of private



Principal Joan Gibbons, left, Hobe Sound Elementary teacher Stephanie Devoe



Pinewood Elementary School teacher Dayna Carroll and Principal Larry Green



SeaWind Elementary School teacher Susan Rao and Principal Birgit Ager



Principal Patricia Harvey and Port Salerno Elementary School teacher Rachel Long

Each quarter, the Hobe Sound/Port Salerno Rotary recognizes outstanding teachers at its Miles

Grant Country Club breakfast meeting. "It's a meeting I make sure I never miss," says former Rotary President Tony Sementelli. "We have some great teachers, and it's important that we let them know we appreciate the work they do for our children."

Teacher of the Year Stephanie Devoe, who serves on multiple school improvement teams, was selected for the Rotary recognition by Hobe Sound Elementary School Principal Joan Gibbons.

Devoe grew up in Martin County, attended local schools and recently completed her master's degree in educational leadership. She and her husband have two sons who attend Hobe Sound Elementary.

From Pinewood Elementary School, third-grade teacher Dayna Carroll was selected by Principal Larry Green for the Rotary honor. She, too, is Teacher of the Year, and has been teaching for 13 years, seven of which have been at Pinewood.

Rachel Long, a Port Salerno Elementary Kindergarten team leader and mentor to three new kindergarten teachers,

leads the screening process for incoming kindergarten students and organizes the kindergarten open house.

"She is deeply knowledgeable about early childhood education," said Patricia Harvey, the new principal at Port Salerno Elementary, "and her classroom serves as a lab classroom for others to visit. Recently, school board member Marsha Powers observed the Reader's Workshop in Miss Long's classroom."

The SeaWind Elementary School's 2014 Teacher of the Year, Susan Rao, was selected by school principal Birgit Ager for the Rotary recognition. "Mrs. Rao is very excited about teaching a combination second/third grade class this year," said Ager. "She is a teacher leader at our school who graciously provides technology training for our teachers, and for teachers in neighboring schools."

The Rotary Club's teacher-recognition program was initiated when the club was founded in 1999.

"This is such an uplifting experience for us," Ager said. "I always look forward to coming here." ■

funds, which was approved by the commission; however, guidelines are still to be set as to what revenues would qualify for a county match.

The qualifications for those matching funds will be developed by County Attorney Michael Durham and presented to the commission for approval at a later date.

More than an hour was spent at Tuesday's county commission meeting on minutiae, such as whether the money would be paid monthly or quarterly, determining the caps on how much money can

be moved from one line item to another, and the limit on line item discrepancies.

Commissioner Scott told the commissioners that no contract can be made impervious to manipulation, if that was the intent, but she felt enough oversight and reporting had been built into the proposed BDB contract that "we don't have to torture ourselves like this."

The commission approved the new contract as had been presented by Sabin, with only Commissioner Heard dissenting. ■

Two new initiatives of the Community Development Department,

a community based code and entrepreneurial support for start-up businesses, were proposed to six of the seven Community Redevelopment Areas at their Neighborhood Advisory Committee meetings in November by Kev Freeman, Community Development director.

The only one of the seven historic neighborhoods who did not hear about both initiatives was Hobe Sound, yet it was the controversy there over a modular home that prompted a renewed emphasis on developing a community-based code, according to Freeman.

"We actually started working on this more than two years ago," Freeman told the Indiantown NAC, "but the situation in Hobe Sound has made it a priority, because residents really did not know what could be built next to them. We have had issues in several NACs because people had no way of telling in advance what a building was going to look like until after it was built, and often times, it was not what was expected and not what was wanted by the community."

The reason, Freeman explained, is because the current code, which must be in compliance with the Land Development Regulations, is long, complicated, and primarily just a text format. He envisions sorting through the three, four-inch-thick code books—a task he's assigned to planner Nakeishea Smith in his office—to pull out what is common code among all seven Community Redevelopment Areas—Hobe Sound, Indiantown, Port Salerno, Rio, Old Palm City, Golden Gate and Jensen Beach—then to determine the elements that make each community distinctive in a separate book.

"We're not talking about rewriting the whole code," he said. "We're talking about making it simpler to understand, so that you don't need an attorney to interpret it, and to have graphical representations so you can actually see what is intended."

He also envisions using Google Earth to create 3-D representations of the code, and many of the buildings of the CRAs already have been imaged in 3-D.

"We plan to present the idea to the county commission probably in January," he said, "because I want to have their approval before we proceed too much farther along."

The other project is to form a partnership with Indian River State College to assist people who have small businesses, generally fewer than five people, or perhaps someone who wants to start a business but does not know what's required or how to begin.

A 12-week training program is being developed by IRSC now, which will be tailored for start-up or micro-businesses, according to Freeman. Tuition would be paid from CRA funds, and following completion of the program, the new business owner may qualify for use of an IRSC incubator at the Chastise campus, still to be developed. They also will receive ongoing mentoring.

"We determined that there was a gap between what the Business Development Board is set up to do, which is generally businesses with 20 or more employees, and these very small businesses," Freeman added. "People have been calling our department for help, for direction, and we really couldn't help them, yet we know creating new businesses is important to our CRAs. We hope with implementation of this training program, we can change that."

When Freeman first presented the idea to the County Commission at a November commission meeting, the commissioners were receptive, however, Commissioner John Haddox also recognized that spending CRA funds is limited. By law, they can be spent only within the CRAs.

"This sounds like a good program, a good idea for growing our business sector internally," Haddox said. "That's what we need; that's what we want, and maybe there's some way we can extend (the entrepreneurial program) to the entire county, to all residents, not just the ones in the CRAs." ■

A momentary look of surprise flashed across Commissioner Ed

Fielding's face at a November County Commission meeting when fellow commissioners Sarah Heard and Anne Scott did not support Fielding's recent initiative, the Indian River Lagoon Collaborative, comprising the six counties along the east coast adjacent to the lagoon. Fielding launched the lagoon restoration initiative immediately after Senator Joe Negron hosted a 8-hour seminar on the Indian River Lagoon and Lake Okeechobee Basin in Martin County during August.

"Why would you NOT support this," asked Commissioner Doug Smith of Heard. "These are the counties most directly affected..." The advantages of sharing ideas and having greater influence as a larger group on legislators and policy makers should outweigh any of Heard's concerns, Smith added.

"I just think we have enough river organizations," Heard responded, adding that she was concerned about "fracturing" the message, and that it was necessary to keep focus exclusively on the approved Everglades projects.

Fielding continued to push for "standing" for the collaborative by the county in order that he could use county staff, including the county attorney, for their purposes and be reimbursed for expenses. Haddox and Smith joined Fielding's vote, overriding the two dissenting votes by Heard and Scott.

The Collaborative has been meeting monthly since August with the hope, Fielding said "of creating a unified effort to achieve meaningful, curative regional action for the Indian River Lagoon."

He has attracted some well-known environmental groups to the effort, including the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program for recording the meet-



Water-quality monitoring in the Indian River Lagoon by a Marine Resources Council volunteer.

The Marine Resources Council is seeking new members during its winter membership drive,

which will contribute to the "Save the Indian River Lagoon" campaign. The Marine Resources Council, a charitable nonprofit organization that utilizes science-based advocacy, education, and community engagement to address lagoon issues, will enhance fish and bird habitat in 2014 by planting more than 5,000 mangroves, raise awareness and knowledge by conducting 50 workshops for citizens and community leaders, including the Lagoon Action Assembly in May 2014, and engaging 200 new volun-

teers in lagoon-lifesaving activities.

The organization relies completely on community donations and matching grants, and 90% of contributions go directly to programs and projects that support its mission. Organizers suggest that a unique and meaningful gift for the holidays would be to register a friend or family member to be a member of MRC. "Give a gift that keeps on giving back," said Dr. Leesa Souto, executive director of the Marine Resources Council. For more info, go to council@mrcirl.org. ■

ings and preparing minutes, as well as Harbor Branch scientists and others.

"I am hopeful the group will become the genesis of regional cooperation in addressing issues harming the Lagoon," Fielding said in an email to Durham, "in adopting solutions for improvement, in seeking State and Federal funding to assist in implementation of solutions, and requesting supportive legislation to reinforce the unified actions the member Counties have chosen to take. We cannot be passive if we hope to address the dire immediacy of the water quality issues of the Lagoon."

The other counties of the collaborative include Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Palm Beach. ■

A community forum, hosted by the Martin County Library System,

to discuss the Indian River Lagoon will be at 6 pm on Monday, Dec. 9, in the John F. Armstrong Wing of the Blake Library, 2351 SE Monterey Road in Stuart. It is open to the public and there is no charge.

In a roundtable format, Noreen Fisher, a member of the Library Foundation of Martin County's Board of Directors and president of the League of Women Voters, will moderate "a civil conversation with community members focused on the Indian River Lagoon. All points of view are welcome, but please

note that this is neither a debate nor a rally, and that no distribution of literature from any group is permitted."

The forum's purpose is to facilitate civil conversation in a neutral environment, a respectful discussion among members of the community. Tickets for the free event are required, and will be available to the first 30 people in line. For more information: 772-221-1403. ■

If residents missed the first two transit workshops by the Martin Metropolitan

Planning Organization the first week of December to update the Transit Development Plan for Martin County, they still have an opportunity to give their input for improving the county's transit system.

A meeting is planned in Indiantown at the Elisabeth Lahti Library from 5:30-7:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 11, or they may fill out a survey online at: www.martin-mpo.com/transit/.

County planners are seeking public input in order to determine transit needs, define alternative courses of action, and develop a blueprint for the transit system for the next 10 years.

The Transit Development Plan also will identify short- and mid-term public transit needs, as well. For more information go to [HYPERLINK "http://www.martin.fl.us/hottopics"](http://www.martin.fl.us/hottopics) www.martin.fl.us/hottopics. ■

Veterans Memorial Bridge: a lifeline to Palm City



Ken Pruitt, former state senate president credited with making bridge a reality.



Nearly 2,000 residents, government officials and dignitaries gathered at the new Veterans Memorial Bridge on Nov. 16 in Palm City not just to dedicate it to all military veterans, but to celebrate its completion after a 25-year wait.

Former County Commission Chair Ed Ciampi, who had volunteered with the Honor Flights for WWII veterans, supported the renaming of a Palm City park in honor of Lance Cpl. Justin Wilson, and was one of many who had lobbied for bridge funding, greeted residents like a proud papa an hour prior to the ceremony.

A Palm City businessman, Ciampi had suggested that the county commission name the bridge in honor of military veterans, changing the name from Indian Street Bridge to the Veterans Memorial Bridge. "It was an obvious choice," he said, "it's also obvious that people really wanted this bridge built...It's just a shame they had to wait so long for it to happen."

The bridge was built against all odds, according to James Wolfe, of the Florida Department of Transportation, who addressed the crowd.

"Constructing bridges like this requires state funding," Wolfe said, "but there is no way this bridge qualified."

It was a county bridge, not located

on a emergency evacuation route or on a major artery, none of the usual qualifiers. "This is a county road, a county bridge and a county vision," Wolfe added, attributing its success to the residents of Martin County and to the unrelenting work of then-Florida Senate President Ken Pruitt, who won funding for its engineering—putting the bridge in the position of being "shovel ready" when federal funds became available.

"The federal government wanted only shovel-ready projects," he added, "and so this bridge got the funding it had been lacking." A near-miracle.

At the mention of Ken Pruitt's name, the crowd erupted in cheers and applause, which continued after he took the lecturn.

Pruitt, in turn, gave credit to Palm City residents who "never let up" their campaign to construct the bridge, including current Chamber of Commerce President Mike DeTerlizzi and "mother of the bridge" Carolyn Davi, executive director of the Palm City Chamber, who said the bridge had been "critically needed" by Palm City businesses and residents for decades.

What no one mentioned directly were the cost of several legal battles that delayed its construction for about three years, as well as about a decade that a no-growth commission failed to push the bridge's progress.

"If it had been built then, before the recession hit and while the county was swimming in impact fees," said one resident, "it would not have cost as much, and the county would have had no issue with paying off the bond debt."

Since the county's revenue from impact fees fell to less than a third of what it had been collecting prior to the 2008 recession, and gas tax revenues have sharply declined due to better fuel efficiency, critics are quick to blame the bridge's construction for funneling funds away from much-needed maintenance of county roads. The county contributed nearly \$30 million of the total \$165 million construction cost of the bridge.

Commission Chair Sarah Heard, a consistent critic of the bridge, was the only commissioner who was not on stage for the ceremony, which was conducted by Commissioner John Haddox representing the Palm City district. She did, however, participate in the bridge ribbon-cutting.

Not quite finished, the bridge—which connects CR 714 in Palm City to Indian Street in Stuart—will be open to traffic by Christmas eve, said George Denti, Cardno's project administrator: "And that's a promise."

County Commissioner John Haddox invited former Florida Senate President Ken Pruitt and state Rep. Gayle Harrell to share a spot on the scissors, as they cut the ribbon held by, from left, Rep. MaryLynn Magar, Stuart Vice Mayor Troy McDonald, Commissioner Doug Smith, Harrell, Haddox, Pruitt, Commissioner Ed Fielding, and DOT engineer James Wolfe. Photo : Courtesy Martin County.



County Commissioner John Haddox, left, who conducted the ceremony, US Congressman Patrick Murphy addresses the crowd, followed by Rep. Gayle Harrell, who talked about the necessity of the bridge to relieve congestion on the Palm City Bridge and its role in spurring economic growth and development.



Former County Commission Chair Ed Ciampi, who suggested the bridge's name, Veterans Memorial Bridge



Stuart Mayor Eula Clarke



Former Commissioner Elmira Gainey

"Mother of the Bridge" Carolyn Davi, executive director of the Palm City Chamber

An email from former Martin County commissioner Maggy Hurchalla to

current Commissioner Ed Fielding's personal computer may be the key that unravels a blanket of secrecy currently cloaking not only Hurchalla's communications, but Commission Chair Sarah Heard's as well, in the Lake Point Water Restoration Project's lawsuits filed nearly a year ago.

Lake Point's suit against Hurchalla



Ed Fielding



Maggy Hurchalla

filed in February 2013 for tortious interference (interfering with a company's ability to conduct business) claims that the former five-time Martin County commissioner worked "aggressively behind the



Sarah Heard

scenes" to convince the county commissioners and the South Florida Management District allegedly to breach their contracts with Lake Point, a rock mining operation in southwestern Martin County near Lake Okeechobee.

(Hurchalla had made several public comments that Lake Point had destroyed 60 acres of wetlands, although Martin County Management Director Nicki van Vonno reported to the commission that no wetlands had been destroyed. Hurchalla also charged that Lake Point's rock pit was deeper than allowed by the county's Comp Plan, which the county has not verified and Lake Point disputes.)

Using the code name "DEEP Rockpit," Hurchalla's private email exchange with Fielding was dated two days prior to the Jan. 15 county commission meeting when the Lake Point project had been placed on the meeting's agenda. Hurchalla gave specific instructions to Fielding: "Avoid discussion of other issues. Don't complicate things. Just set up a meeting to legally void that contract. Don't issue any cease and desist order on the mining. Get the contract cancelled and wait for staff to come back. Doug (Commissioner Doug Smith) will scream that you are missing an opportunity to save the river and giving up money due the county. Engineering will back him up. (Don) Donaldson is Doug's man."

Fielding's response, "Thanks for the input, Maggy."

(Hurchalla's Jan. 13 private email with Fielding is attached to Lake Point's legal motion filed Nov. 25 in district court asking that the county be compelled to produce all private emails of the commissioners that pertain to Lake Point, and to testify under oath as to their methodology in conducting the search.)

On the commissioner's public email system, Hurchalla also sent an email the same day, Jan. 13, to all the county commissioners titled, "Tues Lake Pt. Agenda item," which is still posted on the county's public email database. Hurchalla says in what seems to be an entirely different tone: "I know that it is very hard to look a gift horse in the mouth, but I would strongly advise that you take (the Lake Point Restoration Project) off the agenda until you know what you are getting into."

Two days later, at the Jan. 15 county commission meeting, Commissioners Fielding, Sarah Heard and Anne Scott called for canceling the Lake Point contract, and none revealed having received any private correspondence from Hurchalla.

After Lake Point's original request Feb. 7 for all email correspondence between Hurchalla and the commissioners, their attorneys spotted Commissioner Heard's private email account with her code name, pockethouse, among the public emails as she routinely conducted

county business from her private computer, prompting Lake Point to follow up with a request four days later that Commissioners Fielding, Heard and Scott provide their private email correspondence as well as the public correspondence relating to Lake Point.

"Ms. Hurchalla has produced some emails related to Lake Point that she had sent to Commissioner Sarah Heard's private e-mail account," the attorney's motion reads. "No e-mails to or from any other commissioners private e-mail accounts, however, have been produced."

The private email between Fielding and Hurchalla was provided by the county to Lake Point on Nov. 8, nine months after the original request and after several follow-up requests, according to attorney Ethan Loeb of Tampa. Heard, who provided some private Hurchalla emails to Lake Point, reported to Loeb in February that she was unable to comply fully with Lake Point's public records request because her private computer had been "hacked" and most of her emails had been deleted, although she was using a web-based browser.

Lake Point in turn requested that Heard authorize Yahoo to allow access for a search regarding Lake Point emails stored in Heard's account, after which she retained attorney Scott Zappolo, who denied their request. Subsequently, Lake Point asked 19th District Court Judge James McCann to order Commissioner Heard to sit for a deposition to explain the "missing" emails, but no date for the deposition has yet been set.

Hurchalla's attorneys, Trey White, Cristina Cambo, and Virginia Sherlock, sought to have Lake Point's motions against their client dismissed, but Judge McCann allowed the tortious interference charge to stand at a hearing Oct. 11 in Martin County. Dates to hear other motions in the case have been set for January. ■

A public hearing to consider adoption of a temporary moratorium on

permitting modular homes in residential zoning districts has been set for the Dec. 17 Martin County Commission meeting. The temporary moratorium will allow Growth Management Department staff to review conflicts in county code regarding manufactured homes.

Modular homes, which are constructed to higher standards and to withstand hurricane-force winds than are mobile homes, are protected by federal fair housing and anti-discriminatory laws. County ordinances that could restrict their use would be subject to state and federal review.

The hearing will be conducted in the commission chambers of the county's administrative building on Monterey Blvd. in Stuart. ■

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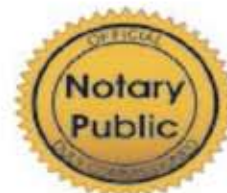
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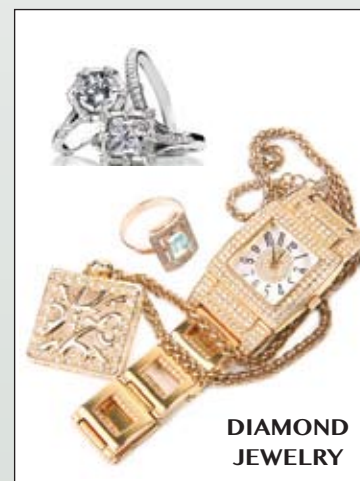
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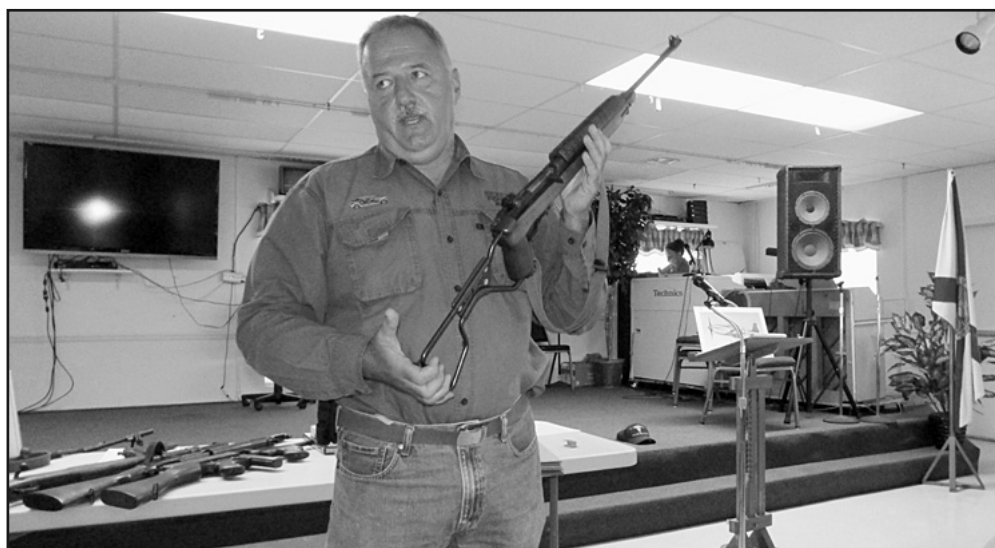
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Ridgeway residents Doris Fenner, an Army veteran, and Hap Harrington, a Navy Veteran, greet guests as they arrive at the Ridgeway clubhouse for a Veterans Day celebration.



Road to Victory Museum Director Michael Roberts gave a presentation on military memorabilia housed at the Stuart museum.

A Veteran's Day event evoked memories, a few tears

After all the Veterans Day parades, dedications and ceremonies were over in mid-November, one more rather special event took place Nov. 13 at the Ridgeway clubhouse in Hobe Sound.

The residents of Ridgeway, a senior community subdivision, recognized the veterans who currently are living in their own neighborhood with a free lunch and special program chocked full of nostalgia, patriotic songs, and memorabilia.

"I am truly honored to be in your presence," said guest speaker Michael Roberts, of the Road to Victory Military Museum in Stuart, who also serves to arrange Honor Flights for Martin County veterans to visit the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. He encouraged the veterans to make the trip if they had not already done so.

"Everyone who has made that trip has said it was one of the best experiences of their lives," he said, "and that's either as a veteran or as a volunteer guardian."

Doris Fenner, a former Army Captain and Ridgeway resident who served "19 days short of 40 years" and is herself a recent Honor Flight veteran, echoed Roberts' admonishment to make the trip. She told about her guardian, an ROTC student at South Fork High School, who had accompanied her.

Fenner had brought to the Ridgeway

luncheon a handful of hand-made Veterans Day cards from the ROTC unit to distribute among the veterans, whose combined service total 168 years.

As Roberts went through his military museum display, holding up various weapons and photos of encampments and vehicles from U.S.

aboard an aircraft carrier, the USS Hancock, told spell-binding tales of his ship, which had survived two Kamikaze attacks, destroyed 732 Japanese planes shooting 10 of them out of the air, and lost 221 men out of the more than 3,200 serving on board, all buried at sea. The ship also shot

He serves now as a member of VFW Post 10132 Honor Guard, often leading parades and helping to provide military honors at funerals and memorial services. "We are honored to do it," he added.

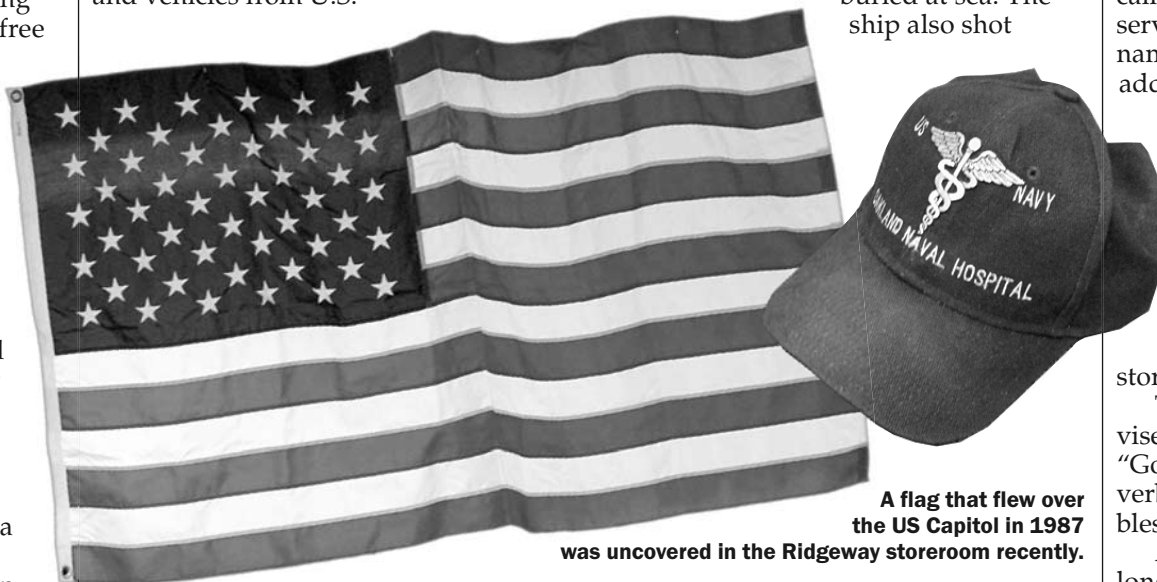
Ridgeway resident and Navy veteran Dick Willis, who emceed the event, called for the veterans of each branch of service to stand and give his or her name, rank and service. They also added little tidbits: "served at Normandy" ... "was in Rhineland" ... "three tours in Vietnam" ... "served stateside for 20 years" ... "was a pilot in a Piper Cub directing field artillery" ...

"On March 1, 1947, I flew to Manila on a C-47," said Fenner, after Roberts had shown photos of a C-47 that had been carefully restored by the Museum.

The program concluded with a televised recording of Kate Smith singing "God Bless America," her alto voice reverberating in everyone's chest: "God bless America...My home sweet home."

As people began gathering their belongings, the mother of a soldier killed in Iran took the microphone. "We celebrate veterans of our past wars as if it's all over," she said. "It's not over. We're still at war. Please remember to pray for our soldiers. Pray for their families." ■

--Barbara Clowdus



A flag that flew over the US Capitol in 1987 was uncovered in the Ridgeway storeroom recently.

military actions, the former soldiers' voices rang out from the audience with their names: a German Mauser, an M-1 carbine, a Luger, a P-31, even a green pack of Lucky Strikes...and so the afternoon passed by.

Ridgeway resident and speaker Fred Erickson, who had served in the Navy

the last Japanese plane in the air at the end of WWII.

"We have only 167 men left of the 3,200 who came home after serving on the Hancock," he said, "so we're diminishing fast."



Dick Willis, a Navy veteran, emceed the Ridgeway event.



Navy veteran Fred Erickson told of his service aboard the USS Hancock during World War II.



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Editorial: Air of distrust dampens return of NACs

Without exception, every Neighborhood Advisory Committee of all 7 Community Redevelopment Areas--Hobe Sound, Golden Gate, Port Salerno, Old Palm City, Rio, Indiantown, and Jensen Beach--were excited to get back to work on the projects they know will build the foundation for increasing the quality of life in their generally working-class neighborhoods.

If Community Development Director Kev Freeman had been standing in the doorway at their first meetings handing them shovels and telling them to start digging...something...they probably would have done it and still been smiling. They are that ready.

Under all the optimism and hope for the future, though, lies a current of distrust--toward county officials generally and the commission specifically--many saying they resent that the NAC members and the former CRA members had been

treated as if they'd done something wrong. They knew THEIR NAC was not made up of power-hungry, self-serving residents, as they had been painted. They also knew that the majority of their members were residents, not "senior managers" of businesses who lived elsewhere, yet they were powerless to stop both the scathing attacks and the eventual dismantling of what had been the most effective three years of revitalization their neighborhoods had undergone since the program began more than a decade ago.

Now they are almost afraid to get their hopes up that they'll have some control over the direction their communities will take, particularly since some commissioners are unwilling even to listen to the logic of their choices. These people live and love every inch of their "place," and toil and sacrifice and volunteer and check on their neighbors and beat the bushes to make it a better place.

Why had they been painted as nearly evil? It's a question they're still asking.

They also do not understand why their CRAs are not entitled to a refund of the TIFF revenues that were mistakenly misappropriated by our lovely property appraiser to the general fund, rather than to the communities from which the monies came?

When Mr. Freeman is asked--and, yes, he is asked--he answers, "There's no money in the budget in the first place, and the money probably was spent within the CRAs on other projects...like roads...that just were not identified as CRA projects."

Now, an explanation like that does not warrant much confidence among residents. They can look around and see what was--or was not--spent in their communities....and it certainly was not on roads or much of anything else either.

They also are asking why the City

of Stuart's CRA apparently is entitled to a refund, but the county's are not. Are these funds not required by law to be spent ONLY within the CRAs from which they came? That's just one of those "inconvenient" facts that can mess up a good argument.

The point is that residents, both within and outside of the CRAs, are feeling betrayed. That's not surprising, because they were, and it will take much more than a charming, talented Kevin Freeman tap-dancing around every question to heal the unnecessary wounds caused over the past year.

The healing won't even start until we have county commissioners willing to listen--not just pretend to listen--but to get outside of themselves and to hear what their constituents are saying--then be willing to take a risk, to place some trust in THEIR judgment, in their experience, and in their perspective. That's what good government should be.

Something is wrong

Our choices of news-services reflect our prejudices, and vice versa. It's probably always been like that. Those who are always quoting conservative newspapers or mainstream TV are conservative and mainstream individuals; those whose references are to online blogs or forums (while ignoring the standard news-sources) are more likely to be rebels and sceptics. People judge our characters by our choices. The internet has broadened the range, but the division is an old one.

What the internet has changed, mainly, are the quality of the reporters and the independence of commentators' opinions. The official news-media allows no departure from the Party Line. Indeed, it allows no departure from the teleprompter's version.

A couple of months ago a Korean plane crashed while landing at a California airport. A local TV newsreader carefully read out the pilots' names, while her audience could see the names printed on the separate video feed. Sum Ting Wong (Captain), Wi Tu Lo, Ho Lee Fuk (she pronounced it "fook", rhymed with "book") and Bang Ding Ow. You can Google those names, if you want to see the actual telecast.

It was a one-off, and it would be unfair to build a case on one brief example of mindless recitation. Or would it? It did illustrate the mainstream zombies' instructions to say what their superiors tell them to say -- no hesitation, no doubts, no deviation.

A recent scandal in Britain was the disclosure that a senior executive



Gordon Barlow

Outside, Looking In

at the BBC ordered his minions to play down Israel's bombing of a Gaza suburb during one of its raids. That sort of manipulation is common in the MSM these days. In general, it is beholden to its national advertisers and to the legislators who can make life difficult -- and to the lobbyists who own the legislators. Jon Stewart on the Comedy Central TV channel invented the word "truthiness" to describe the official versions of events. What a wonderfully satirical invention that word is!

The "alternative media" is free of such restraints. It offers alternatives to the official "truths". Mainstream reporters, to a man and woman, presume they are reporting the truth; freelance bloggers increasingly presume the authorities are lying. The alternative media doubted Saddam Hussein had WMDs; the mainstream media weren't allowed to doubt. If they are told sum ting wong, they report it.

The mainstream news sources parrot the official versions of WTC #7 (the building that collapsed in its own footprint because of a few office fires), the gassings in Syria, the Iranian nuclear plans, and the death of Osama. The blogosphere insists the official stories are blatant propaganda, and wonders what is being covered up, and why. I

myself jeered at the Osama lies in a blog-post of May 2011, and at the infamous "wiped off the map" false-translation in February 2012. [The blog is "Barlow's Cayman", accessible via Google.]

There is a gulf of mistrust. Parallels are being drawn with earlier false-flag attacks. The Reichstag Fire paved the way for Hitler's propaganda equivalent of America's PATRIOT Act. Both were drafted well in advance of the event -- which the alternative media find highly suspicious! In recent weeks, it has emerged that almost all the military experts interviewed on Western TV are actually in the paid service of companies with a vested interest in Western wars. They are all part of a pro-war propaganda machine -- TV stations and interviewees alike.

Unquestioning belief generates heresies that must be quashed, and heretics who must be persecuted. The MSM has become an arm of a 21st-Century version of the brutal religious authorities of the 16th Century.

We are on a slippery slope, at the moment, with a rapidly increasing distrust of officials and their mouthpieces. There is a clear disconnect between us and them. On the one side, the establishment's stooges and shills: on the other, amateurs and anarchists. There is little scope for compromise. Where do we go from here?

(It bears saying, that independent local publishers of news and opinions, such as Martin County Currents, are outside the scope of this criticism. They are reliant on

local advertisers, whose finances are far too small to overwhelm the integrity of their reporters and commentators. If newspapers have a future at all, it will exist in the small local ones.)

Gordon Barlow, a world traveler, professional blogger and political commentator, lives in the Cayman Islands.

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Why Florida should embrace Common Core



Nancy Smith
Guest Columnist

I believe in Common Core State Standards, believed in them decades before they existed, and desperately want them for my grandchildren, their children and the future of this great nation.

If I'd been an educator, I might have invented them.

There, I've said it. I'm "out." And I can explain.

In 1976 my husband and I uprooted our seven children from schools in the United Kingdom, transplanting them in the U.S., in the mountains of New England. Two years later we did it all again, moving the gang to South Florida, enrolling them in schools in Stuart.

Talk about culture shock. And I don't mean the change from English to American football, or from oak trees to alligators. I'm talking about education. After each move, our kids were thrown into some wildly different learning environment -- each time streets ahead of their classmates in all subjects. In Florida this was particularly disconcerting, because Martin County had the top-performing school system in the state. What if we had moved, say, to Madison County or Duval County? What if one day we moved to Alabama, Ohio, California or Virginia?

I totally feared the idea of a pot luck education if fate had sent our family packing again.

The thing is, I had no idea if our children were being taught skills like critical thinking and deep analysis, and how prepared or competitive they would be as they moved on to college and careers in our knowledge-based global economy. I cared about all that. A lot. But no one could tell me. No one.

Certainly, I wasn't alone. Read investigative journalist Amanda Ripley's new book, "The Smartest Kids in the World and How They Got That Way." The gist is that American students are not performing at the same level of their peers internationally.

Our educational system -- a coat of many colors, a different flavor for every state and, in some cases, for every county in the state -- is not keeping up with the system of many other industrialized countries, even as the job market becomes more global and international competition for jobs becomes steeper.

Here we are, leader of the Free World, and as the Broad Foundation, an educational reform group, tells us, "American students rank 25th in math, 17th in science and 14th in reading compared to students in 27 industrialized countries."

It was only in the last three decades that parents and state lawmakers were shown school systems need accountability: measurable goals, thorough and fair evaluations of performance, incentives for achievement and interventions for poor performance. In fact, Florida has been a leader in insisting on accountability.

But, measured against what?

We are in the enlightened 21st century now and thank heaven educators in the majority of states miraculously have come to realize that we need that accountability to be standardized. We need a "common core" of rigorous standards -- the same standards -- in every state, as a nation.

I've listened carefully to the naysayers, I really have, but I can't for the life of me see "conspiracy theory" in any part of Common Core State Standards.

Neither can I see how politics plays a part in their adoption. When I want the best education for my child, I don't think of it as a Re-

publican or Democratic thing; it isn't progressive or conservative. It's just wanting my child to be able to compete on a level playing field with anybody anywhere in the world. Whatever it takes, whether it's red or blue.

I have great respect for Shane Vander Hart, perhaps the most active force in the trenches against Common Core, but he bases the majority of his opposition on issues that have nothing to do with the actual standards themselves.

CCSS is sensible and badly needed reform and should not be derailed by misguided and misinformed opposition. It's discouraging to see states that had originally embraced this effort blink in the face of unexpected political opposition. We're down to 46 plus the District of Columbia.

Here's what I think the problem is:

Even though Common Core has been around for more than two years, most people are just hearing about it. And in some states Common Core testing has

been implemented before even teachers, let alone parents, have been instructed in how to teach students using the new standards.

And we've put such a premium on testing and scoring, when our priorities should be on teaching. Teaching is what this is all about. And I don't mean teaching to a test, or teaching specifics, as so many fear.

When students score poorly on the more rigorous Common Core-based tests, it threatens to cause a backlash among parents, who increasingly see testing as the problem, not the solution.

But talk to teachers who have been with Common Core for a while. I've spoken with so many now who are so into it, who are converts and now are com-



mitted to seeing CCSS implemented.

Melissa Erickson, who began working on Common Core in 2009 with the National PTA and continued on her own since the PTA project ended, claims she's seen virtually zero negativity from teachers. "Certainly, it's a big shift when everybody is making the shift at the same time," said Erickson, "but the more into it teachers get, the more they come to be believers. This is not about teaching anything Washington dictates. It's about reaching goals."

As for the problem of data mining -- harvesting information from student files -- Erickson agrees that's a problem, but not one brought on by Common Core. "Authorities have been gathering and distributing student information ever since the invention of the mimeograph machine," she said. "Certainly it's a conversation we should be having, but it has nothing to do with the Standards."

Patricia Levesque, chief executive officer for the Florida-based Foundation for Excellence in Education, looks at Com-

mon Core from a parent's perspective:

"All standards are, are end-of-the-year expectations. As the mom of a kindergartner, I'm paying attention, and I can tell you all kindergartners used to have to do is count to 20 by the end of the school year. Now they have to do that by the end of the first quarter.

"By the end of the year they have to count to 100, and they have to be able to count by 10s. They have to be able to follow words left to right and know that sentences start with capital letters.

"The teacher uses text books or work books, but how she teaches him -- how she gets my son to the goal at the end of the year -- is determined by Leon County, not by the state of Florida or the federal government," Levesque explained.

Andrew Vega, a teacher at Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School in Boston, Mass., said: "It's imperative that administrators understand, as my principal does, that it may take time for the benefits of the new curriculum to be fully measurable. I'm convinced the kinks will work themselves out and that teachers shouldn't fear Common Core. What I'm doing in my classroom now just feels so much better, and two years into the Common Core, I am a better -- and happier -- teacher than I've ever been."

I support high standards.

I support our children being competitive with other children in other states and other nations. And I understand that Common Core State Standards in and of themselves don't mean students will learn more -- but coupled with good accountability and assessment, I believe when all the bugs are worked out, they're going to be everything I was hoping for those many years ago, when my husband and I were trying to figure out where our kids stood, where they were going and if they had a hope of getting there. ■

--Printed originally in *Sunshine State News* on Nov. 25, 2013

Nancy Smith, executive editor of Tallahassee-based *Sunshine State News*, was reporter, city editor, managing editor and associate editor of *The Stuart News/Port St. Lucie News* for 28 years. She left *The News* in January 2005. Reach Nancy Smith at nsmith@sunshinestatenews.com or at 228-282-2423.

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Apollo School event breaks records

The freshly refurbished, historic Apollo School in Hobe Sound hosted its first public event since its interior renovation was completed. Guests were stunned to see the number of vehicles parked throughout the Zeus Park neighborhood, some parking down A1A at Apollo's "Art in the Windows" event.

"It looks like everyone who lives in Hobe Sound is here tonight," said Laurie Gaylord, superintendent of schools. As well as quite a few who don't live in the small village 11 miles south of Stuart.

Special guests included State

Senator Joe Negron, who was able to squeeze a \$150,000 grant out of the state budget to top off the 15 years of fund-raising by the Apollo School Foundation, organized by Kathy Spurgeon, president.

When Spurgeon addressed the record-breaking crowd after a record-breaking art auction that raised more than \$18,000 for landscaping and other amenities with a reminder that she had promised that after the building was saved, then restored, that the next step would be to create an historical museum "for the people of Hobe Sound."



David and Linda Chambers took home an original acrylic in an old Apollo School window by Carey Chen of Jupiter with a winning bid of more than \$5,000. Chen also provided free samples of his new line of wines.



Local artist Dan Mackin, center, with Michele and Tony Hannan who placed the winning bid of more than \$6,000 to take Mackin's "School's Out" home with them.



The dynamic duo who conducted the live auction: Harry MacArthur and Bob Steiner.

Kathy Spurgeon, president of the Apollo School Foundation.



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The holidays make the whole month of December sparkle: the lights, the celebrations, candle flames, Menorahs, Christmas trees and the wonder in the eyes of children. Martin County offers a dizzying array of events, with one exception. Due to lack of funding, the Port Salerno Christmas Jamboree that provided bicycles to dozens of local children and a dump truck load of real snow will not happen this year, but plans are in place by Port Salerno Community Promotions for more fund-raisers to ensure the Jamboree resumes next year. For this month, though, take your pick from other great events and make a memory!



Weekend, Dec. 6, 7, 8 Christmas Street Parades

Nothing like a parade to herald the season, and we've got a bunch of 'em all on the same weekend, beginning with the Stuart Christmas Parade on Friday night, Dec. 6, at 7:30 p.m. through downtown Stuart.

On Saturday, Dec. 7, two parades will happen, one in Hobe Sound at 1 p.m. (preceded by an art stroll next to Taste restaurant on SE Dixie Highway, beginning at 10 a.m.) on A1A in downtown Hobe Sound, turning west onto Bridge Road. The Martin County Sheriff's Office will kick-off the parade with a helicopter fly-over, kids will get to see some of their favorites like Ronald McDonald, Smoky the Bear, Clowns and the Nesquick Bunny. The rumor is that even Mrs. Claus will make an appearance this year. Bands and musical presentations will include Dancensound DJ Rich Otten, Murray Middle School Band of Pride, South Fork High School Spirit & Pride, Anderson Middle School Band and Hidden Oaks Middle School Band & Color Guard.

In the same afternoon, the Indiantown Christmas Parade will begin at 4 p.m., after Ronald McDonald speeds over there from Hobe Sound. He, along with the floats, will gather at Big Mound Park at 15285 SW Indian Mound Drive at 2:30 p.m., with the parade starting at 4 p.m. and ending at Post Park, immediately followed by a Christmas tree lighting courtesy of the local Lions Club. About 30 units have signed up, and will include lots of horses and even some livestock on the floats, according to Hillary McKeich, executive director of the Indiantown Chamber of Commerce. The parade is expected to last about an hour, but the fun will be all day.

A parade like no other will be Sunday, Dec. 8, when the Jupiter Tequesta Athletic Association presents its 37th Annual Christmas Parade at 1pm, beginning on Alt A1A and Center Street in Jupiter and proceeding north to Bridge Road in Tequesta. Each float and participants will be celebrating all holidays at this year's parade with the theme "All OTHER Holidays with a Twist."

"Just think of what the Easter bunny all decked out for Christmas would look like," said parade director Michael Cesarano. "Let's not forget St. Patrick's Day, President's Day or Valentine's Day. Imagine Mrs. Claus and the elves getting ready for Thanksgiving." More than 1,700 participants will take part.

Saturday, Dec. 7 Martin County Christmas Boat Parade



The 33rd Annual Martin County Christmas Boat Parade will be Dec 7 at 6 pm, starting east of the Roosevelt Bridge near downtown Stuart. Viewing stations include Flagler Park and City Docks, Stuart Riverside Stage, Martin Memorial Hospital, the Evans Cray Bridge (Stuart to Sewalls Point), Sandsprit Park and Manatee pocket. 772-692-7599 Don't forget the binoculars and a jacket. Other Holiday Boat Parades in our area include: The St Lucie Winter Boat Parade, Friday, Dec. 13, in Ft. Pierce, and Indian River County's Holiday Parade on Saturday, Dec. 14, in Vero Beach, and in Jupiter.

For additional information, contact the Marine Industries Association of the Treasure Coast at 772-692-7599 or mmiller.miatc@gmail.com.



Melodie McKenzie
and Judy Oswald

Saturday, Dec. 7 Children's Christmas Sale at St. Luke's

Each year St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Port Salerno holds a Christmas Sale for children ages 4-14 to purchase Christmas gifts for their family and friends. The children's Christmas gifts are priced from 25 cents to \$5, so that a gift is affordable to all. Each child should bring a list of people for whom they want to buy presents, and a "Santa's elf" will guide the child through the parish hall to the gift tables. After making the selections, the child will proceed to the wrapping room where all gifts are wrapped and tagged ready for the Christmas holiday. Proceeds from the sale go to community outreach. The church is at 5150 Se Railway Ave at the corner of Cove Road and A1A. For more information, call 772-286-5455.

Saturday, Dec. 7 Christmas Cuties Mini Nutcracker Performance

The Dance Academy of Stuart will present its holiday show featuring the Mini-Performance of "Let it Snow" at South Fork High School. Tickets for the 3 p.m. performance are Adults - \$15; Senior Citizens (65+) - \$12; and Children - \$10 each.

Sunday, Dec. 8 Singing Christmas Tree

The last chance to experience Hobe Sound Ministries' 17th Annual Singing Christmas Tree will be Sunday, Dec. 8, at 7 p.m., if you missed their Friday and Saturday night performances at the same time. This spectacular, near-professional stage production features 75 singers in a Christmas tree of thousands of lights, a 25-piece orchestra, a children's choir and a cast of 50. The production also includes live instrumentation and singing, in addition to flying angels, kings and shepherds, the holy family, and the message and lights of the season! Admission is free, but an offering will be asked of attendees. Hobe Sound Ministries is at 11295 Gomez Ave in Hobe Sound at Hobe Sound Bible College. Call 772-546-5696 or visit www.hobesoundsingingtree.com.

Sunday, Dec. 9 Designs for the Holidays

The speakers for the general meeting of the Garden Club of Stuart will be Emily Kane and Susan Slater, flower show judges and designers. They will make four special designs for the holidays at 11 a.m. on Sunday, Dec. 9, at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 7251 S.W. Gaines Ave, in Stuart. RSVP: 772-219-4332, or contact Sandee108@gmail.com for more information.

Sunday, Dec. 9 Holiday Home Tour

The 5th Annual Holiday Home Tour of magnificent homes decorated for the holidays will be Sunday, Dec. 8, from 1 to 5 p.m. An event of the GFWC Woman's Club of Stuart, the homes are located in Stuart, Sewall's Point, and Palm City. Tickets for the tour are \$30, and may be reserved by calling 772.545.7780, through their website at www.womansclubofstuart.com, and at the door the day of the event. Tickets are \$35 at the door. Only 500 tickets are available. The tour begins and ends at the Clubhouse, 729 SE Ocean Boulevard, Stuart, and proceeds benefit the Woman's Club of Stuart scholarship fund and charitable giving. Tickets are tax-deductible.

Tuesday, Dec. 10 Cooky Baking Contest at Hobe Sound

A holiday fundraiser for the Hobe Sound Toastmasters Club includes a cooky-baking and cooky-tasting contest during the Hobe Sound Toastmasters International Table Topics Speech Contest on Tuesday, Dec. 10, at Hobe Sound Bible College, Archie Coons Fine Arts Center, at 11295 S. E. Gomez Ave in Hobe Sound. The doors will open at 6:30 and the contest is expected to end at 9 p.m. The public is invited at no charge to bring a platter of 20 cookies (or other baked goods along with 20 copies of the recipe, even if it's the back of a box) to enter the contest, but cooky contestants must register to participate by calling Jan Otten at 772.546.4724.

So with free admission, how does the local Toastmasters raise funds? Cookie tasters, which includes everyone attending, will "vote" for their favorite cooky recipe by depositing any amount of money into the cooky jar. At the end of the evening, the cooky that raises the most cash (so tell your friends to stuff the ballot boxes!) will be declared the winner of an artistic cooky apron created by Brooke Samples, a member of the Hobe Sound club. It will be a fun evening of unexpected surprises, not only since Table Topic speeches—short impromptu speeches—catch speakers by surprise, but no one knows what cookies will be lined up for tasting.



Wednesday, Dec. 11 OPUS & Combined Choir Holiday Concert

What many residents consider essential to experience for the holidays, the Annual OPUS & Combined Choir Holiday Concert under the direction of Ronald L. Corbin, will be Wednesday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. in the Wanda H. Yarboro Performing Arts Center, 2801 S. Kanner Highway, in Stuart. The concert will feature traditional hymns, festive holiday songs and performances highlighting OPUS singers. Tickets are \$15 each, and can be purchased from choral students or by contacting Tina Bartolotta at 772.248.2139 or email: tinamarieb14@gmail.com.

The Holiday Concert is the major fundraiser for trip-related expenses for Martin County High School's OPUS (Outstanding People United to Sing), who will travel to New York City in March 2014 to take part in the WorldStrides Heritage Music Festival competition. During the Holiday Concert intermission there will be an auction for a live OPUS Concert to be performed at a private home, event or business! Refreshments will be served by OPUS boosters in the lobby.

Friday, Dec. 13 Children's Community Christmas Concert

A special Community Christmas Concert featuring "Children of the Arts, Passing on the Legacy of Classical Expression" will include the Treasure Coast Classical Children's Choir, the Redeemer Lutheran Handball Choir, and the Amazing Grace School of Dance on Friday, Dec. 13, at 10 a.m. in the Blake Library auditorium, 2301 SE Monterey Blvd. in Stuart. There is no admission charge.

Friday, Dec. 13 South Fork High's Holiday Concert



The South Fork High School jazz, concert and symphonic bands will perform a holiday concert to celebrate the holi-

days at 7 p.m., Friday, Dec. 13, at the South Fork High School Auditorium, 10205 S.W. Pratt Whitney Road, in Stuart. Admission is only \$5. For more info about the event, call 772-287-7811.

Weekend, Dec. 13-15 Live Nativity: 'A Journey to Bethlehem'

A live nativity scene, "A Journey to Bethlehem," with continuing performances from 6-8 p.m. each night, Dec. 13, 14, 15, will be at the Redeemer Lutheran Church and School, 2450 S.E. Ocean Blvd. in Stuart. For more information, call 772-286-0911 or visit www.redeemerstuart.com.

Weekend, Dec 13-15 Christmas Angels & Cowboys at the Barn

Don't miss the Barn Theatre Holiday Show, "Christmas Angels & Cowboys at the Barn." Performances are Friday, Dec. 13, and Saturday, Dec. 14, at 8 pm and Sunday matinee, Dec. 15, at 2 pm. This holiday musical review includes both traditional and country-themed Christmas and Holiday songs. Price for reserved seating is \$15 for adults, \$10 for students. 772.287.4884

Saturday, Dec. 14 South Fork High School Community Spectacular

Spectacular in every way, the SFHS Community Spectacular on Saturday, Dec. 14, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., and includes crafts, household items, organic produce, gifts and more for sale to shoppers. If you want to sell your own stuff, tables are \$20 each, which benefits the United Way. 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Rent a table and keep what you make from your sales, or go shop. For more information, call Jodi Goode, 772.219.1849, ext. 103.



Saturday, Dec. 14 Wreaths Across America

Riverside Memorial Park on County Line Road in Tequesta will be the site for laying wreaths at the gravesides of American Veterans on Saturday, Dec. 14, by members of the American Legion Auxiliary of the Rood Williams Post 271. The program is part of the national effort to honor military veterans. The time is yet to be announced, but for information, call 561.741.0580.

Sunday, Dec. 15 Traditional Lessons and Carols

For a deeply moving, exquisite Christmas event, be sure to attend the Traditional Lessons and Carols at St. Luke's Episcopal Church at 5 p.m. on Sunday Dec. 15. A reception will follow at the church, 5150 S.E. Railway Ave., at the intersection of A1A and Cove Road in Port Salerno. For more information, call 772-286-5455.

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Saturday & Sunday, Dec. 14-15 Stuart Community Band Holiday Concerts

The ever-popular Stuart Community Concert Band will present three holiday concerts this season. The first two will be Saturday, at 11 a.m. and at 2 p.m., Dec. 14 at the Blake Library, 2351 S.E. Monterey Road, in Stuart. A ticket is required by calling 772-288-5702. If seats for those two concerts are already filled, you still have a chance to hear a Sunday matinee performance at 2 p.m., Dec. 15, at the Kane Center, 900 S.E. Salerno Road, in Stuart. Tickets for those 55 and older range from \$5-\$8. For more information, call 772-223-7800, or go to www.kanecenter.org.

Friday-Saturday, Dec. 20-21 Welcome to Manhattan

You'll be transported back to a simpler time with musical favorites from the Golden Age of Broadway to your Memories of the '40s and '50s, including Frank Sinatra, Bing Crosby, and Dean Martin. Take a break from the hustle and bustle of the holiday season to tap your toes with these timeless treasures and heart-warming hits from "New York, New York" to "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas." This charming cavalcade features Barn Theatre favorites, Nicky Wood, Dante Marelli, Arlette Eulo, Betty Dallas, Claudia Paonessi, and, newcomer, Erin Howard. Performances are at 8 pm on Friday, Dec. 20, and at 2 pm on Saturday, Dec. 21. Tickets may be purchased online or at the box office. Reserved seating ticket price is \$15.



Through Dec. 22 'Annie' at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre

America's favorite comic-strip orphan comes to life in the Tony Award-winning musical set in the Great Depression. You'll cheer as Annie escapes from her "Hard-Knock Life" but don't wait until "Tomorrow" to get your tickets. This one will sell out fast! For show times and ticket prices, go to www.jupitertheatre.org.

Tuesday, Dec. 17 A Peter White Christmas at The Lyric

For more than four decades, acoustic guitarist Peter White has brought variety to the contemporary jazz scene with his impressive combination of jazz, pop, and classical guitar. A long-time session musician, Peter White's smooth musical styling is perfect for the melodies of the holiday season. His intelligent and inspired arrangements of Christmas classics, with the accompaniment of Rick Braun and Mindy Abair, offer a refreshing new take on time-old songs. Two performances: one at 6 p.m. and the second at 8:30 p.m. For ticket information, go to www.lyrictheatre.com.



Thursday, Dec. 26 The Nutcracker

The St. Lucie Ballet will perform at the Lyric Theatre presenting the classic story of Clara, who awakens after a holiday party to find that her beloved nutcracker doll has changed into a real live prince. The Nutcracker Prince must defeat the wicked Rat King and a despicable army of mice in a bitter war to the end. After the victory, the Prince escorts Clara as they travel to strange far-off lands to sample the exotic sights and flavors of the world. Based on a fairy tale by E.T.A. Hoffman and set to the memorable musical score of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky. This production features renown guest artists, beautiful scenery, dazzling costumes and spectacular special effects.



Sunday, Dec. 29 Christmas Bird Count

One of the most rewarding holiday events is the annual Audubon bird count, which is open to everyone all day on Sunday, Dec. 29, at the Hobe Sound Nature Center, about a mile south of Bridge Road at 13640 U.S. 1 in Hobe Sound. You will be doing exactly what it says: Identifying and counting the birds you see that day. To sign up, go to www.hobesoundnaturecenter.com.

Give the gift of an adventure this holiday season

A gift for the man (or woman) who already has everything stumps most people this time of year, yet just about half an hour's drive west from Stuart lies one of Martin County's little-known, ecological treasures—J&R Outfitters and Old Florida Wildlife Tours—a place that can provide the gift to a loved one they'll never forget.

Prices range from \$50 for a breathtaking, Old Florida Wildlife swamp buggy tour of this 4,000 acre private game preserve and working cattle farm on Fox Brown Road west of Indiantown to \$500 or more for an entire day of hunting—from quail to big game. It's the largest facility of its kind east of the Mississippi.

"If you bag your game," says Rena Mullins, manager of J&R Outfitters, "the additional trophy cost is determined by your targeted game, but we do not guarantee that you'll bag an animal—only that you'll have a great hunt."

J&R Outfitters is a fair-chase facility and hunting is on foot over 3,000 square acres, which gives the animals fair odds that it can escape, particularly if its skills to elude are more refined than the hunter's skills to chase; however, hunters are not left alone to wander the grounds.

"You'll have an experienced guide who will share his knowledge with you," she says. "Even first-time hunters are welcomed here—they get special attention and instruction—so we really need to know in advance that they've never hunted before in order to match the guide to the needs of our guests."

She calls visitors "guests," but in reality, they're treated more like family, staying in the nearby bunkhouse at no additional charge, sitting on the porch to watch the sunset with owner Joey O'Bannon, licensed to guide and hunt in Tanzania, Africa, as well as in Florida. His quick wit causes bursts of laughter to erupt periodically in the evening's hush, and according to some of his guests, out on the hunts, as well.

"I've been on a lot of safaris," said one guest, "and this outfit makes the experience just as exciting as any I've had anywhere, but Joey O'Bannon makes it fun, too."

O'Bannon takes his role seriously,



Old drainage ditches have been filled in order to restore Florida wetlands, habitat to a variety of native animals including alligators.



One of the extraordinary views from atop an Old Florida Wildlife Tours swamp buggy is a healthy herd of Pere David's deer, once on the brink of extinction.

however, as a conservationist and naturalist, as well as a hunting guide. Over the past 25 years that he's owned this piece of property, he's been working at his own expense to remove the exotics and fill drainage ditches, restoring the ranch to its original pristine state.

"What you see here," he says as he leads a buggy tour around his property, "is what Florida was 100 years ago. You'll not find one exotic plant growing anywhere on 4,000 acres."

What you will find, though, are old cabbage palm islands, oak hammocks, and pine flatwoods dotting the landscape with wetlands, prairies, ponds and uplands in between, providing the perfect habitat for a variety of deer, antelope, water buffalo, alligators, wild hogs, and game birds, as well as a host of native

animals and birds, including gopher tortoises, crested caracaras, sandhill cranes, falcons and eagles.

"We also provide habitat for several species of deer that are rare or extinct in the wild," Mullins adds. "For instance, the Pere David's deer have been extinct in its native China for hundreds of years, but their species survives because of ranches such as ours."

Another critically endangered species is the Barasingha deer from India, on the brink of extinction in its native land, but thriving in large herds at J&R Outfitters.

"Part of the permit fees paid to hunt Barasingha here go back to their native India," she adds, "to provide for critical habitat for this rare species."

With the exception of the Asian water buffalo, which are destructive when mating, all the animals breed naturally on the ranch, according to Mullins, resulting in vibrant, healthy herds that the Old Florida Wildlife swamp buggy tourists seem to enjoy the most.



The most dangerous big-game animal to hunt in the US is the water buffalo, which roams in large herds at J&R Outfitters.

"The deer have no fear of the swamp buggy," O'Bannon says, "because no shot has ever been fired from a buggy. That's why we can get so close to them."

The extra height of the swamp buggy also gives visitors awe-inspiring views of a sweeping horizon that at times seems to undulate from the crossing herds of deer and water buffalo, a dangerous, big-game animal that looks momentarily docile when looking down at it from above. But it is not. Hunters come from throughout the US, Canada and Latin America for the adrenaline-pumping chance to take one down.

J&R Outfitters also cater to those who prefer the milder thrill of quail, pheasant or snipe hunting, providing trained pointers for guests who do not have their own dog. They also keep additional guns and ammo on site, since traveling across country can be difficult with a weapon, and they provide a breadth of other services—and more than a dozen potential quarry—to make each experience uncomplicated and memorable.

You sense its uniqueness as soon as you turn up J&R Outfitters' long driveway to the guest house, confirmed as you sit on their wide front porch. You're suddenly experiencing an unspoiled time, when even the air, and all the plants and animals who breathe it, is different from wherever you just came.

"None of this would be possible without hunting revenues," Mullins says. "These environmental efforts simply would not be possible, but, you know, the best conservationists in the world are hunters, because maintaining a healthy natural environment is critical to what we do."

Go experience Florida as you've never done before, or provide that gift to someone you love.

For more information, call 772.485.5391, or visit [HYPERLINK "http://www.jrOutfitters.com/"](http://www.jrOutfitters.com/) www.jrOutfitters.com. ■

--Barbara Clowdus





Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus to visit Hobe Sound

Santa and Mrs. Claus will arrive in Hobe Sound on Saturday, Dec. 7, for the 28th Annual Hobe Sound Christmas Parade, which will feature Kathy Spurgeon, president of the Apollo School Foundation, as Parade Grand Marshall.

This annual holiday tradition is free and is presented by Treasure Coast Irrigation and Rood Landscape. The popular Santa couple will ride in the parade in a special, vintage wagon compli-

ments of Treasure Coast Irrigation.

Other special guest appearances will include Ronald McDonald, Amara Shriners, Smoky the Bear, the Nesquick Bunny, AMVETS, VFW, clowns, elves and holiday characters. Patrons can wave to Senator Negron, Representative Magar, the Martin County Commissioners, Sheriff Snyder and other local and state officials as they ride in the parade. The Martin County Sheriff's Office will kick-off the event with a helicopter fly-

over, which will thrill kids of all ages.

There is no shortage of live entertainment planned for the parade: hear musical selections from Dancensound DJ, Murray Middle School Band of Pride, South Fork High School Spirit & Pride, Anderson Middle School Band and Hidden Oaks Middle School Band & Color Guard.

Families can arrive at 10 a.m. to enjoy the holiday art stroll, then claim the perfect viewing spot along the route

for their blankets and lawn chairs. The parade begins at 1 pm and the route is along Bridge Road and Dixie Highway, and the Art Stroll ends at 3 p.m.

Parade floats and decorated cars are sponsored and created by local businesses, schools and organizations. Supporting sponsors include Bridge Boat & RV Storage, Coast 101.3 and Scripps Treasure Coast Newspapers. Call the Hobe Sound Chamber of Commerce at 772.546.4724 for more information. ■

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Modular home issue shoves NAC meeting aside

The first meeting of the “reconvened” Hobe Sound Neighborhood Advisory Committee on Nov. 6 covered little “official” business; instead, county officials—including county attorney Michael Durham, Community Development Director Kev Freeman, and County Commissioner Anne Scott—listened and attempted to answer the questions Hobe Sound residents fired at them in a community building filled to capacity.

It was the second time within a month that residents, primarily of Olympia Plat, known locally as the Zeus Park neighborhood, had gathered to discuss their options in having a manufactured home in their traditional neighborhood of site-built homes removed.

To describe the Hobe Sound residents as irate would be an understatement, particularly former Hobe Sound NAC Chairman Mike Ennis. A highly regarded building contractor considered to be one of the pillars of his community, Ennis called for Hobe Sound residents to use their solidarity to form their own municipality.

“It’s the only way to have control of our own future,” he said, after railing against the county commission for abolishing the independent Community Redevelopment Agency one year ago—the first official act of Commissioner Sarah Heard as chairwoman—and for “dismissing” all the NACs two months later.

Those two decisions, Ennis affirmed, along with the lull that followed as the county rewrote its NAC qualifications and rules, resulted in the placement of the low-cost manufactured home in Zeus Park.

“That NEVER would have happened under the old CRA,” Ennis explained, which previously would have alerted local NACs of proposed changes to their neighborhoods, he said. The NAC members would then in turn make recommendations to an independent, volunteer agency appointed by the commission that oversaw all seven CRAs. Their decisions were subject to county commission approval, but seldom did the “old” commission overturn any action of the CRA, whose decisions were based on the input of the NACs.

The “new” county commission (elected in November 2012) now sits as the Community Redevelopment Agency and the Public Art Site Selection Committee, as well as the commission. The elected officials announced their intention even prior to their election that they intended to evaluate local NAC requests



A stop-work order has been placed on the installation of a modular home in the Zeus Park neighborhood of Hobe Sound until the legal issues revolving around its foundation and zoning are settled. The home faces the alley, although its address is on Apollo Street.

in terms of what they see as in the best interest of the county overall, rather than in the individual interests of each Community Redevelopment Area.

The projects completed in the Community Redevelopment Areas have already resulted in increases in property values greater than those that lie outside of the Community Redevelopment Areas, according to Freeman, and “That shows that redevelopment works.”

The development director also told the gathering that the role of the Neighborhood Advisory Committees actually have not changed, that they’ve always been just advisory in nature. More than a dozen residents disagreed, and their loss of faith in county government convinced them to form the Olympia Defense Fund to fight the county Building Department’s decision to allow the

modular home in Zeus Park.

It is a certified modular home that exceeds the county’s code for hurricane construction with additional roof trusses, etc., but it is primarily the foundation that seemed to lack sufficient strength to withstand a major storm.

“But what I’m hearing from you,” said Freeman, “is that even if this had a slab foundation, it would not be enough; you would not be satisfied.” The crowd shouted, “No.”

An appeal to the Zoning Adjustment and Licensing Board has been filed by their attorney Ginny Sherlock, ironically one of the most strident critics of the former Community Redevelopment Agency. Her law partner, Howard Heims, was in the audience during Ennis’ complaint about the county’s decision to dissolve the NACs and the former

structure of the Community Redevelopment Agency, leading Heims to quip, “because it (the CRA) wasn’t working.”

Ennis apparently did not hear Heims, as he continued to address the issues with the building department and its apparent inconsistency in applying CRA standards.

“The CRA standards in Hobe Sound are not tight enough,” Freeman responded, a comment that drew an avalanche of criticism and anecdotal stories of the county forcing residents to spend thousands of additional construction dollars in order to meet CRA standards. Apparently, the standards were never entered into the county’s code, however, thus were enforceable, according to county staff.

“Well, if I cannot get a building permit until CRA standards are met,” Ennis said, “that’s not voluntary compliance....and the county owes thousands of dollars to these people who have been forced to spend money when they didn’t need to...to do what the building department required.”

County Attorney Durham said that he had been negotiating a possible compromise with the property owners, Stuart and Jane Greenberg of Palm City, to put in a solid, slab foundation rather than an “engineered” foundation. The steel chassis of the modular home is stacked on concrete blocks and tied to compacted soil with corkscrew anchors. He also has been discussing an alternative that would improve the exterior aesthetics, including adding a porch.

“Modular homes, from the foundation up, are protected by the federal government,” Durham said, but the county can specify the type of foundation, landscaping, setbacks, etc.

“We’re fortunate,” Durham added, “that we have some monies available to do some things to make it more aesthetically pleasing, although we may not be able to have it removed.”

Durham was referring to the Hobe Sound CRA budget, which has exceeded \$1 million, according to Freeman, with more expected from the 2012-2013 fiscal year. The revenue comes from a percentage of the increase in property values from year to year, which are required by law to be spent in the county from which it came.

“We don’t want our CRA funds spent on this,” Ennis said. “Not one dime...we just want the county to admit their mistake and get it out of here—and the expenses are theirs ... and should come out of their pockets, not ours.” ■

Legal wrangling begins

The director of the Martin County Building Department, Larry Massing, who has hired his own attorney, interpreted the Florida Building Code as allowing a modular home to be placed on an engineered foundation, which he apparently considered an acceptable “alternative” permanent foundation when he issued a building permit Oct. 1.

The attorney representing four Hobe Sound residents, Ginny Sherlock, filed an appeal Nov. 12 of that permit with the Construction Industry Licensing Board in an effort to reverse Massing’s decision to authorize the placement of the home on Apollo Street in the Zeus Park neighborhood of Hobe Sound.

A hearing must be scheduled by the Licensing Board within 30 days of the filing of the appeal; however, the county has asked for a continuance so County Attorney Michael Durham can negotiate further with the property owner.

In the meantime, the County Growth Management Department Director Nicki van Vonno issued a Notice of Violation of the zoning code and land development regulations, because that department determined that the Apollo Street home is not on a permanent foundation and zoning codes were violated.

After receiving the county’s code violation notice, the Greenbergs retained an attorney, as well.

Chamber begins planning for May's Home Expo

The members and staff of the The Palm City Chamber of Commerce are busy working now to plan their 2nd Annual All Around the Home Expo and Business After Hours for May 16 from 4-7 p.m.

Jointly sponsored and hosted by Martin Downs Golf Club, the event is free and open to the public until 5:30, after which the venue becomes the chamber's "Business After Hours" venue that will offer one free drink and appetizers for a \$5 charge.

More than two dozen vendors have signed up already, who will set up product displays regarding anything anyone ever needed in a home—inside or out—

including interior designs, kitchen, bath, air conditioning, windows, closets, reality, garage, plumbing—even bamboo from the Bamboo Shoots nursery. But it's not limited to home products. The expo also will include products for your health, wealth and happiness, according to organizers.

Attendees will be able to browse the various displays for project ideas and promotional items, or just to sign up for the multiple door-prize giveaways offered by vendors.

The Chamber's Business After Hours, which will start at 5:30 pm, will provide an opportunity for attendees not only to get a drink ticket and munch on some



snacks, but they also may take part in the Chamber's 50/50 drawing at the conclusion of the evening.

"Plan to attend this exclusive All

Around The Home Expo," said Carolyn Davi, Palm City Chamber's executive director, "and get some creative ideas for your home at the same you'll be getting to know your local Palm City business owners a little better."

To make a reservation for the event, which is not required but encouraged in order to ensure sufficient food will be available, go to www.palmcitychamber.com. For more information call Flo at Palm City Chamber 772-286-8121. ■

PALM CITY CHAMBERS NEWEST MEMBERS

Pan American Round Table

Dr. Carmen Boden

P.O. Box 175
Palm City
772-209-8805
iegallant@hotmail.com



Suzanne Wentley

101 SE Central Parkway
Stuart
772-288-5758
www.cscmc.org

The Palm City Chamber's Annual Installation Gala will be Jan. 25, 2014, at Piper's Landing from 6-10 pm. The gala's theme, "Palm City Renaissance: Night of the Light," represents revitalization and celebration, according to organizers, and will include the installation of new chamber officers.

Outgoing president, Michael DiTerlizzi, a Martin County School Board



Michael DiTerlizzi
Outgoing Chamber President



Niki Norton
Incoming Chamber President

member and business owner, will install architect Niki Norton as the Chamber's 2014 president.

A cocktail hour from 6-7 pm will be sponsored by Piper's Landing Yacht & Country Club, 6160 SW Thisle Terrace in Palm City. The event will conclude at 10 p.m.

Sponsorship opportunities and ticket sales are available online at www.palmcitychamber.com or by calling the Chamber at 772-286-8121. ■



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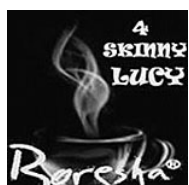
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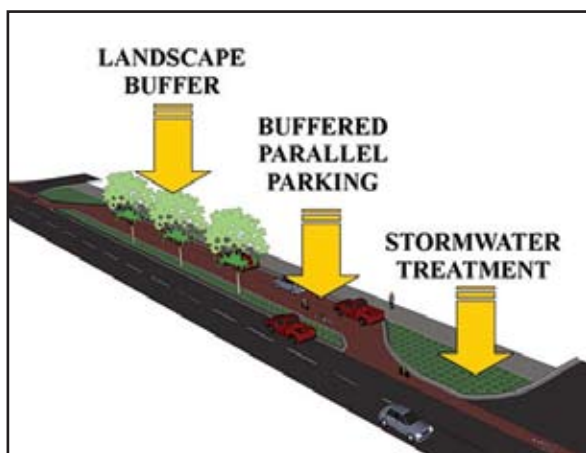
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New Mapp Road plan revealed at Old Palm City

No mistaking that Martin County Community Development Director Kev Freeman was excited about a new proposal for the Mapp Road project in Old Palm City when he addressed the first meeting this year of the Old Palm City Neighborhood Advisory Committee on Nov. 18. You could hear it in his voice.

"We have something really exciting to share with you tonight," he said. "We know that Mapp Road is a spine that runs the whole length of the Old Palm City CRA (Community Redevelopment Area), and we know it's vital to the community...and we thought we had the best plan, but we were still \$700,000 short..."

The previous plan incorporated traditional methods for dealing with a roadway's stormwater run-off, including pipes, culverts and retention ponds. The previous plan also called for back-in parking, which would slow traffic, but



The new design for Mapp Road will overlay the swales with pervious material, add bike lines, create pockets for parking, treat the stormwater with rain gardens and other devices, thus maintaining current traffic flow and mitigating stormwater run-off into the St. Lucie River.

the additional spaces would benefit the businesses along Mapp Road. The old plan also was expensive to construct.

"I challenged my staff, who had done quite a lot of research on stormwater treatment," Freeman said, "and we partnered with our engineering and util-



Chuck Smith, Chair



Douglas Legler, Vice Chair



Rex "Doc" Sentell



Tracy Seagott

The New Members of the Old Palm City Neighborhood Advisory Committee



Joseph Gilio



Thomas Plymale



Jane S. Vandrum

ities departments...asking the question, is there a way, can we treat stormwater right in the roadway?"

The eventual answer, they discovered, is, yes, we can.

The innovative new plan, which may get funded as a demonstration project because of its suitability and applicability to a broad number of other places, will maintain the current flow of traffic on Mapp Road (abandoning the back-in, on-street parking concept). It will maintain the same number of parking spaces as in the old plan, and they will treat

stormwater right in the roadway. They also will be able to add bike lanes and sidewalks.

"It's an engineering miracle," Freeman said. "This is a huge thing. No one else does it, which makes finding the funding we need (around \$1.3 million) a much greater possibility."

The next Old Palm City NAC meeting, which is open to the public, is scheduled for Monday, Feb. 17, at the Palm City Community Center at 6 p.m. ■

New crosswalk planned in front of Mulligan's

By partnering with the county's engineering and utilities departments, Kev Freeman, director of the community development, told the Jensen Beach Neighborhood Advisory Committee members on Nov. 20 that he has been able to maximize the impact of projects and reduce their cost through the economies of scale.

"The engineering department was already coming through (on Indian River Drive) and resurfacing," Freeman said, "but by adopting our plan, they were able to reduce the amount of asphalt required, and of course, we were better able to influence what would be done at that intersection (with Jensen Beach

Blvd) since we made our proposal in advance of their project being done."

A new pedestrian walkway across Indian River Drive in front of Mulligan's restaurant is being planned to increase pedestrian safety, which would include adding off-street parking and an island to make the crossing safer and more efficient.

"The other property owner, Sundance Marina, is excited about the improved accessibility," Freeman added, "and they might even start some work on their own site plan."

The committee also accepted responsibility to serve as the sign committee, the only NAC that approves all signs prior to their placement within the CRA to ensure they meet the criteria of the Jensen Beach CRA. They are accepting applications now through Dec. 11 for committee members, which must be filed with Community Development Department via fax (772-419-6942), e-mail (njohnson@martin.fl.us) or to drop off at the county Administrative Center on Monterey Road.

Jensen Beach NAC members



Sharon Adams

For more information, contact Nancy Johnson at 772-463-3253 or via e-mail.

The next meeting of the Jensen Beach NAC, which is open to the public, will be Wednesday, Feb. 6, at 6 p.m. in the Jensen Beach Community Center. ■



Frank Wacha Jr., Chair



Stephen Dutcher, Vice Chair



Glenda Burgess



Robert "Mac" McElroy

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Golden Gate NAC to tackle stormwater issues

The Golden Gate neighborhood received both good news and bad news from Community Development Director Kev Freeman at their first Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting in nearly a year. The good news is that the Railroad Avenue Commercial Revitalization project identified by Golden Gate residents as a targeted area for redevelopment in the 2002 Golden Gate Redevelopment Plan and at the 2010 Neighborhood Opportunity Workshop is complete.

"A lot was accomplished," Freeman said, "and we're already seeing a difference among the businesses along Railroad Avenue who have started sprucing up what had been their back lots, as more and more of them realize that they have new road frontages and the potential that brings to their businesses."

They've also stopped encroaching on the Martin County and FEC rights-of-way, and some also have started investing in their own properties as well, he said, which will raise property values.

"We removed 5,000 tons of contami-

New Golden Gate NAC Members



Jan Dalcorsio, Chair



Michael Wilchak,
Vice Chair



MaryAnn Moore



Althea Redway



Joe Hatton

nated soil," he added, "which means we were removing the threat of additional pollution of the river. The water drained directly from Railroad Avenue into the river." The primary contaminate probably had come from the creosote from old railroad ties that had leached into the soil, Freeman said.

The bad news was that the earlier renovation of some of the roadways east of Dixie Highway in Golden Gate had caused stormwater drainage issues causing flooded lots for some of the businesses and homeowners, particularly the Habitat for Humanity ReStore.

"We need to address stormwater drainage," he told the group, "because Golden Gate already has a septic tank problem with a number of failed septic systems. This community has been identified in the past, I believe, as the worst area in the county for failed septic in an old survey, and I doubt that has changed much."

With lots flooding, the septic drain fields also flood, and effluent winds up being washed directly into the river, Freeman said.

His staff currently is working on the issue in conjunction with the engineering

and utilities departments, and could possibly approach local businesses about replacing their parking lots with pervious materials, Freeman suggested, in order to allow rainwa-

ter to drain into the ground, rather than to create sheet flow onto other properties.

Freeman also discussed with members the possibility of using Golden Gate CRA funds to accept an offer by a local bank to purchase an abandoned home for \$5,000. The estimate to repair damage to it is in the neighborhood of \$30,000. The members voted to follow up with the bank, and to investigate the proposal further.

The next Golden Gate Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting, which is open to the public, will be Monday, March 10, at 6 pm. in the Cassidy Center. ■

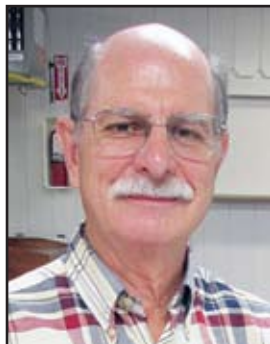
The New Rio NAC Members



Debra Harsh



Myra Galoci



Robert Taylor



Rick Zurich, Chair



Jim LoPilato



David Wishart



Brent Waddell

Rio's hopes for public art in roundabout dashed

Rio Neighborhood Advisory Committee Vice Chair Jim LoPilato registered no surprise when Community Development Director told the committee that their vision plan had

been rejected by the county commission, and they also had been denied the use of Rio's CRA funds to purchase a piece of public art for the new roundabout recently constructed on County Road 707 in Rio.

LoPilato wasn't surprised, because he'd been at the commission meeting, and commented after Commissioner John Haddox said he would not approve expenditure of funds for anything other than infrastructure—roads, bridges, stormwater treatment or sewers.

"Some people consider art as infrastructure," LoPilato replied.

The commissioners also said they felt the Rio vision plan was too ambitious and did not address the immediate needs of the community. The news did not sit well with the other committee members, who complained that they had worked on the vision plan for 10 years—with the exception of Rio NAC member Myra Galoci, who told Freeman that she "had issues with the plan."

"The vision plan is not dead," Freeman said. "I've been directed to bring it back to the Rio community, so they can look at it again with fresh eyes, get their input, and also present it to the commission in such a way that they realize that

the vision is just that, a vision, so that if a business comes in here, we've got something to show as to what kind of streetlights or benches or bus stops we expect them to put in. It's not a plan to go out and purchase these things."

Freeman said another community workshop will be planned, which will be the 19th workshop or meeting over the past four years that he and his staff have devoted to crafting a plan that the community would buy into, he said. "We're going to keep at it," he added.

Many other projects are beginning to take shape in Rio from private investors, including the purchase of the Rio Village Mobile Home Park, which appears from first indications will continue its life as 25' x 100' housing lots, the possible redevelopment of the waterfront, and the construction of a "boutique" food market.

The next meeting of the Rio NAC, which is open to the public, will be Thursday, Feb. 27, at 6 p.m. in the Rio Civic Center. ■



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Extending sewer, streetscape in Port Salerno

Extending the sewer system west on Salerno Road was a major topic at the Port Salerno Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting Nov. 12 at the Port Salerno Civic Center.

"We have the funding in place now to extend sewer to the businesses along Salerno Road," said Community Development Director Kev Freeman, "but we'd like to extend it to the homes in that neighborhood, as well, so we're working with the engineering and utilities departments for the economies of scale....and to see if we can't come up with some funding solutions."

When pressed by the Port Salerno residents attending the meeting as to why the sewer line could not be laid down Salerno Road now, then add other areas as funding becomes available, Freeman responded, "Well, the district commissioner (Sarah Heard) wants to see those neighborhoods on sewer, and it would probably be more cost-efficient to wait until it could be done at the same time....but we're looking at some grant possibilities that might be available because of Port Salerno's proximity to the Manatee Pocket."

The New Port Salerno NAC Members



Catherine Winters,
Chair



Karen "Mike" Gordon



Gloria McHardy



Ellen Asselin



Cynthia Oakowsky



Butch Olsen,
Vice Chair

They also requested an update as to the status of the previously planned benches and umbrellas along the Manatee Pocketwalk west of A1A, adjacent to Basin Seafood. "Maintenance is an issue," Freeman said, which is why the project was delayed, "because no formal agreement was reached (over the past year) about how and who would maintain them."

Prior to the dissolution of the NACs, however, an innovative public-private partnership between the county and local businesses had been announced, in which the county would purchase the amenities, such as cigarette receptacles, trash bins, and umbrellas, if a business

owner would commit to keeping them clean. Currently, even without a signed agreement, the Manatee Grill maintains the public plaza in front of its restaurant, and also retrieves the stingray umbrellas during high winds.

"The Port Salerno Restaurant Association agreed to do that and they've been doing it," said John Plant of Basin Seafood, "and I'll commit to doing the same thing. I already take care of the boardwalk next to my place."

Freeman said it was just a matter of getting approval of a (purchase order) from the county to purchase benches and umbrellas, but the staff also would follow

up with formalizing the public-private partnership agreement between the county and the restaurant association.

Freeman also told the members that the owners of the King Neptune restaurant had asked about the possibility of extending the A1A streetscape further north along the street that now ends at the Salerno Road intersection. The committee unanimously agreed that it would benefit the business area, and also that additional benches should be installed at various spots along the Pocketwalk as a safety issue for pedestrians.

The next meeting will be Thursday, March 20, at the Port Salerno Civic Center on Anchor Avenue at 6 p.m. It is open to the public. ■

Indiantown NAC poised for new growth, tackling more projects

The largest of the Community Redevelopment Areas at more than 5,000 square acres, Indiantown's Neighborhood Advisory Committee meeting brimmed with expectations of the future.

"We have some potentially exciting businesses looking to locate in Indiantown," Community Development Director Kev Freeman told the NAC gathering, to which NAC Chair Art Matson asked, "Are we going to get an opportunity to have some input before they get here?"

Freeman assured Matson and the committee members that they would have input, "after we have something formal to present."

The Carter Park project is progressing, Freeman added, as well as the Boys and Girls Club at the heart of the project, which is nearing completion. He



The Boys & Girls Club at the heart of the Carter Park
nears completion.

also revealed that the Habitat for Humanity homes already constructed had been appraised at \$120,000 each in a neighborhood of homes usually appraised at \$60,000.

"That will make a huge impact on property values," Freeman said, "and it proves that redevelopment works."

An audience member and resident, Polly Williams, asked if the rumor she'd heard was true, that the boundaries of the Indiantown CRA were going to be redrawn to reduce the size of the CRA.

"It's not a matter of redrawing boundaries," Freeman responded. "All the CRAs will be reevaluating their plans and looking at what's best for their community."

Matson requested that meetings be held monthly, as they'd had in the past, and Freeman said that emergency meetings could be called, but that initially, all the NAC meetings have set quarterly meetings to start.

"If there's a need for more frequent meetings," he said, "then we'll definitely have them."

The next scheduled Indiantown NAC meeting will be Wednesday, Jan. 8, at the Indiantown Civic Center on Osceola Street at 6 p.m. All NAC meetings are open to the public. ■

The New Indiantown NAC Members



Catherine Deninger,
Vice Chair



Art Matson, Chair



Donna Carman



Craig
Bauzenberger



Bernice Simpson

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Port Salerno's Fish House: art as a form of synergy



**Maya
Ellenson**

*Art
Kaleidoscope*

In Port Salerno, home to one of the state's few remaining commercial fishing waterfronts, not all roads necessarily lead to fish. One of them takes us to the Fish House Art Center, a one-of-a-kind art colony on the scenic Manatee Pocket, where Salerno Road dead-ends east of A1A.

Its presence in an old fish house fits naturally into the cozy atmosphere of the historic fishing village of Port Salerno, edging The Grove Dock Bar & Café next to a marina, gleaming on gold-plated water.

That's the place to sip a cup of fragrant coffee as you watch the sun-blazed boats, but only after you've perused an array of distinctive artwork by half a dozen artists in various media.

The "Manatee Pocket Walk," a boardwalk that girdles the Art Center like a luminous aura over sunlit waters, reflects the resplendent beauty of the now, along with its charming local colors and hints of its past, creating a relaxing ambiance for visitors to appreciate the synergy among art, fishing and a serene, breathtaking setting.

On the historical site where the center is now, the original E.J. Ricou Fish House was built in 1913 when the town was called Mulford. One day, a female passenger was let off the train accidentally in Mulford, instead of her intended stop at Fulford, exposing her to a nasty, black legion of mosquitoes. After that incident, the railroad company demanded that Mulford change its name to avoid a lawsuit, which is how the town was renamed Salerno, chosen because many of its inhabitants had immigrated from the Italian town of Salerno.

Along with the local history it embraces, the Fish House Art Center, with its distinctive "candy-colored" art studios, provides visitors a cornucopia of

artwork to enjoy—painting, sculpture, glass, textiles, pottery, photography, jewelry, and giftware.

"We are the arts colony," said Carolyn Gordon, owner of Art Gumbo Gallery and a talented watercolorist, as she graciously escorted me through her elegant and spacious gallery in the refurbished, two-story fish house building. She features many other artists' works in diverse media, in addition to her own watercolors that are infused with a delicate waiflike beauty that only this medium can convey—the technique she shares with her art students.

And as the artists "guild," the Fish House Art Gallery takes you back to the legendary Byrdcliffe Art and Crafts Colony in Woodstock,

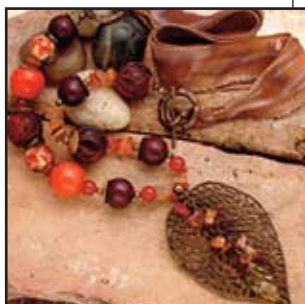
tional works of art and "basking in the creative energy," as Elizabeth Esther Kelly, the weaving and mixed media artist, expressed so poetically on her blog, Tapestry of Light.

Each of her textile "compositions" is entwined with a deep and beautiful poetry we all can relate to:

Just sharing here some colors/Inside and out.



Carolyn Gordon



Raida Disbrow

THE ARTWORK OF PORT SALERNO FISH HOUSE ARTISTS INCLUDES:



Roxy Linde



Rick Eggert



Sally Eckman Roberts

New York, and its numerous counterparts that emerged at the turn of the 20th century nationwide, based on the aesthetic principles of the Art and Craft Movement.

Rejecting soul-less and standardized production that came along with the era of industrialization, its founders advocated for restoring medieval integrity and imparting the divine spark to the arts and craftsmanship. As one of its followers in the United States, Elbert Hubbard, said: "Art is not a thing; it is a way."

That is precisely what the Fish House arts colony stands for—crafting excep-

One is the sunset on Pinelake, the other a new warp on the loom in Port Salerno.

In the Tibetan culture, weaving, among other traditions, signifies the interconnectedness of all—the metaphor Elizabeth holds sacred. That's how she keeps the spirit of Tibet alive, she said, by burning its timeless incense and honoring its exclusive spiritual pattern on this side of the globe; and, in this way, creating a meaningful alternative to "made in China," that cheap and impersonal universe.

When you watch her work on the

four-harness wooden loom in her Fish Art Center studio, called Gateway to Tibet—in friendly presence of her Corgi, Chrissie—it seems she plays the lyre, weaving strings of light into her femininely smooth and softly-toned scarves and wraps.

Diane Concepcion, an exquisite mosaic artist, discusses with contagious enthusiasm her radiant medium, ushering me to her sunlit studio.

"I always loved jigsaw puzzles and did cross-stitch embroidery," she told me. "I find the art mosaic very intriguing and fascinating as little bits and pieces are enabled to create the ultimate forms and images for decorative purposes or just for pure art's sake."

"My students love the mosaic mostly because it does not have to be perfect," she added, "but eventually those who have a real knack come up with the masterpieces we all are proud of."

Whether it's Lora Yakimov's sparkling "Silver Sea Life" sculptures, Roxy Linde's marvelous silk art, Sally Eckman Roberts' original home décor designs, Raida Disbrow's one-a-kind lampwork glass and artisan jewelry, or Rich Eggert's glass-blowing that allows

him to express through this see-through medium such concepts as mutation and "frozen time," they all invite us to enter the shrine of the local artist, where all pieces of the mosaic come together, reflecting Florida's kindly spilled sunshine and a gentle breeze in a unique, made-only-in-Port Salerno way. ■

Russian-American Maya Ellenson, who holds M.A. and PhD degrees in Russian language and literature from Moscow State University, has lived in Martin County for eight years. A free-lance writer, she has a particular interest in world culture and art.



Artist Diane Concepcion in her Port Salerno mosaic studio. (Photo by Maya Ellenson)



The loom on site at Elizabeth Esther Kelly's studio, the Gateway to Tibet.

Mistletoe Madness coming to Fish House Art Center

Santa Claus will pay a personal visit to the Fish House Art Center in Port Salerno on Friday, Dec. 6, from 5-6 p.m., where each child can get a FREE photo with Santa as carolers from South Fork High School provide holiday music.

Santa's visit kicks off the Fish House artists' annual Friday night and Satur-

day, Dec. 7, "Mistletoe Madness" weekend from noon to 8 p.m.

The artists of the Art Center have been collecting new, unwrapped Toys for Tots throughout November, and visitors are invited to add to the collection that goes exclusively to Martin County children in need.

Over the weekend, each art studio

will have specials on their artistic creations, and The Grove Dock Bar will provide drink specials as you enjoy their live musical entertainment as you stroll through the artists' studios.

Each visitor to the Fish House Art Center also will receive an entry card, which must be punched at each studio and at the Art Gumbo Gallery, to enter

a drawing for an original piece of art from one of the studios.

The Fish House Art Center is about five miles south of Stuart at 4745 SE Desoto Avenue in Port Salerno. (Take Salerno Road east until it dead ends east of A1A on the Manatee Pocket waterfront.) For more information, go to the Fish House Art Center Facebook page.

My African Journal continues with the Maasai



**Suzanne
Briley**

Hopscotch

A safari to Africa a decade or so ago made an indelible impression on columnist Suzanne Briley, who wrote the first of two installments about her trip in last month's Martin County Currents (online at www.MartinCountyCurrents.com). She continues with some excerpts from her "African Journal."

The Maasai are people who immigrated from the Sudan and northern region of the Nile some 400 years ago. They live independent of the outside world, graze their thin cattle on the open plains and drink the blood of goats and sheep with milk—no vegetables or fruit. Their life span is short because of malaria, cholera and other tropical diseases.

One can see them from afar with their beautiful tall silhouettes against the sky, wearing robes of colorful fabrics, and holding spears in hand. Small children from the age of six are given the responsibility of a large herd of cattle. It is remarkable to see intense concentration on their little faces. They are taught how to defend themselves against wild animals as well.

There are approximately 150,000 Maasai in Tanzania living on land given to them by the government. The women are quite handsome with very white teeth, large eyes and strong faces. They are friendly, but shy, and wear colorful beads. Some of the old ones are in desperate need, living in mud huts with straw rooftops and no shoes. During rainy season the shelters are quite dire indeed. There are children everywhere...along the road, fields, farms, standing in the blowing wind, spear in hand.

Closer to Manyara Park, in a more fertile area, live a different tribe of people wearing ragged clothes, living in mud huts, who scratch out an existence by farming a bit of corn.

There are no paved roads in Tanzania and many thousands walk on the dirt roads.

Not far away from Manyara Park, we arrived with intentions to stay in tents. It was truly in the "bush." Our tent was equipped with a narrow bed, a wooden dresser, a mirror, hot water bottles, a tiny shelf, a table with candlesticks, and outside, behind the tent, was a tiny shower. We often had fresh towels and our laundry was done.



African elephants with the majestic Mt. Kilimanjaro in the background. (Courtesy of Amboseli Park)

I wore khaki color pants and shirts, the same color of the dusty roads. Hot water was provided by wood fires heating five-gallon drums of water. The tent was near the river and had a small awning and two chairs facing the distant blue hills.

As I put my things away, the sky cleared and a triple rainbow appeared and arched its way through the heavens. That night, I heard two lions speaking in the dark, and the lovely sound of a bird in the wood. A quarter moon made an appearance.

A Maasai warrior stood guard holding a spear outside the tent all night. I heard many sounds: more lions, hippos crashing through the wood, and the cry of a distant group of hyenas. In the early morning a steward appeared outside my tent with a

tray of tea and milk, leaving it on a table.

When I came out, I saw a group of baboons scampering off into the bush, dragging the milk pitcher and teapot. Later, after a delicious breakfast of fruit and eggs served on a large table under the trees, I returned to my tent just in time to see the same baboons having a wonderful time running out with my bed sheets, headed across the camp. It seemed that they were laughing as much as I was.

Later in the day, I saw a large pride of lions (females) sleeping in the hot noonday sun. They were chewing ears, resting, yawning and one slept on her back with her legs spread far apart in the air. We were very close to a cheetah, also sleeping in the grass, and while I watched I saw a large eagle fly down, kill and eat a newborn baby gazelle. The mother was helpless.

We always left for

male ostrich sits on the eggs at night, and the white female ostrich guards the eggs during the day. Perfect.

There were thousands of wild flowers, and I looked upon a lovely lilac-breasted thwart bird, yellow and brown parrots, and a group of bright red bishop birds. Large groups of elephants were in the distance often crossing in front of us. One evening was so lovely and blue, I decided to go for a walk. I should have heeded the warning: NOT TO WALK ALONE. Near the camp I came upon a 17-foot python. Just frightening!

I fondly admired wart hogs (humorous), the snake-eating mongoose, and small jackals. We were on an intensive journey and had crossed 2,000 miles. Rain descended upon us in heavy sheets, making it impossible for me to take the hot air balloon over the Serengeti. I had never seen such a flood, mud everywhere and deep sink holes. A Land Rover traveling with us turned over in the black sticky mud. Our Maasai driver was skillful and calm, and he never lost a moment's concentration. It took two hours to travel 12 miles.

The little air strip closed down, so that the plane scheduled to fly us further

into Amboseli and Mt. Kilimanjaro was delayed, which was all part of the great adventure. We would travel there next, when the little air strip dried and Mt. Kilimanjaro rose above the clouds, sun crowning its snow-capped peak as it stood on the equator.

That flight put

the period on my African adventure, something I'll never forget, an adventure I am fortunate, indeed, to have to experienced at least once. ■

Suzanne Briley, who lives in Hobe Sound, is an artist, author, entrepreneur, environmentalist and world traveler. She may be contacted at hopscotch@hscurrents.com.

No "butts" keeps Martin beautiful

Keept Martin Beautiful recently launched a program to reduce the amount of cigarette butts that are littering the landscape of Martin County. Coordinated by Keep America Beautiful, the national pilot "Cigarette Litter Prevention Program" has been launched at two targeted locations in the community known for large amounts of tobacco-related litter: Mary Brogan Park and Flagler Park, both in Stuart.

Ash receptacles have been installed at both parks to encourage residents to dispose of cigarette waste properly instead of simply flicking cigarette butts to the ground, where they remain until a citizen picks them up or an animal mistakes it for food and ingests it. Keep

Martin Beautiful is also distributing pocket and portable auto ashtrays as part of the program.

Statistics from the 2013 Keep Martin Beautiful's International Coastal Cleanup effort showed that more than 25 percent of the litter collected in Martin County was tobacco-related trash, and in 2008, nearly 200 communities reported an average 46 percent reduction in littered butts as a result of implementing this program. .

"Nationally, the cigarette litter prevention program has proven to be highly effective," said Jim Dragseth, board president of Keep Martin Beautiful. "Simple actions like installing ash receptacles and distributing pocket ash-

trays have made noticeable difference in decreasing litter and ultimately keeping communities beautiful and litter free. By raising awareness and taking actions to involve the community, we are hopeful for similar improvements here in Martin County. Keep America Beautiful has field-tested and expanded the Cigarette Litter Prevention Program for the last six years with support from Philip Morris USA, an Altria company.

To request pocket and portable auto ashtrays or for more information on this or other Keep Martin Beautiful programs, visit www.keeptmartinbeautiful.org, email info@keeptmartinbeautiful.org or call 781-1222. ■



Cigarette ash and butt receptacles have already been installed by Keep Martin Beautiful at Flagler Park in Stuart. (Photo provided.)

Parents sell, sign new book about son's death

Billy and Karen Vaughn, the parents of Aaron Vaughn, a member of Navy SEAL Team Six killed by the Taliban on August 6, 2011, will address a gathering on Friday, Dec. 20, at 6 p.m. in the Towers Building, 1111 SE US Route 1 in Stuart. It is free and open to the public.

The Vaughns will sign their book, "Betrayed," a recently published account based on author Billy Vaughn's investigation into the circumstances of his son's death and the U.S. government's culpability.

Navy SEAL Team Six member Aaron Vaughn was one of 30 US servicemen just three months after the death of Osama bin Laden when their Chinook helicopter was shot down by Taliban militants over Afghanistan. Vaughn, 30, left behind a wife and two children.

Karen Vaughn said in a Fox News interview that despite another book detailing one SEAL's account of the bin Laden

mission, it normally is the desire of Team Six members to stay private.

"I can tell you one thing," she said, "SEAL Team Six did not want to be identified...those men do not need a pat on the back. They don't work for that. They spend their entire lives in this code of secrecy and privacy, and they do not want attention."

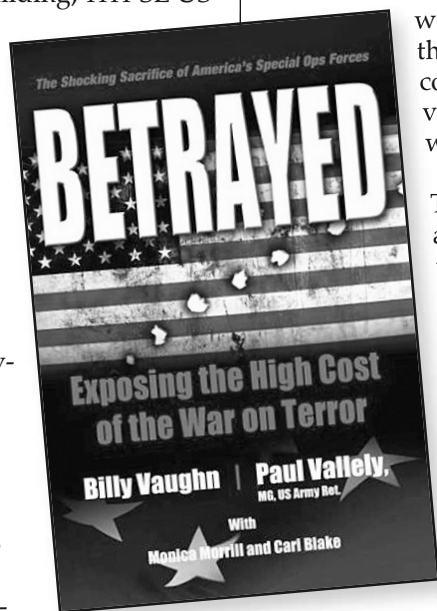
It's the attention that Team SEAL Six received after bin Laden's death that Billy Vaughn blames partially for the death of his son. He also says that US military forces are not being led to win battles, but have been sent instead to "win the hearts and minds" of other nations, leading to complicated US Military Rules of Engagement.

Billy also learned that a Muslim Imam was invited by US military leaders to "pray" over his son's dead body, but according to the heartbroken father's interviews with eyewitnesses, the Imam damned the fallen soldiers as "infidels" who would burn in hell. As US

military leaders observed the ceremony at Bagram Air Base, the Imam boasted over the deaths of US heroes with words such as, "The companions of heaven [Muslims] are the winners."

According to the publisher's press release, "Betrayed is a heart-rending account in America's history, an engaging story of faith, patriotism, honor, duty and loss....a book Billy Vaughn wishes he didn't have to write. But his son is gone and there are still unanswered questions. He needs to know if finding the truth may prevent another father from standing in his shoes."

A Christmas bake sale also will take place during the book signing, and a new Constitution coloring book will be available for purchase in time for Christmas. ■



Navy SEAL Team Six soldier Aaron Vaughn, killed in Afghanistan in 2011.

Smartphones a healthy gift choice for seniors



Nicolette Christie

Ask Florence

Want to give Grandma a great gift this Christmas? How about a call? On her new smartphone? Which, of course, you bought, and she uses and totally loves for ... the health benefits.

Findings show more and more seniors finally relinquishing those flip-phones and trading them for smartphones. Pew Research captures the trend. In 2012, only 13 percent of seniors 65 and older owned smartphones. Today, that number is up to 18 percent.

It's easy to understand why. A smartphone can be a real lifesaver. (And not just by ignoring it when you're driving.) Developers are creating software that enables patients to complete routine medical tests with the comfort of a smartphone. The app can measure a patient's heart rate and—when attached to blood-pressure monitoring device—detect any abnormalities in the test's results. The idea is to better arm patients with insights when they see their doctor.

Another new application available for mobile download helps seniors manage their medication. Programs like MedWatcher alert seniors to government safety warnings and provide information about possible side effects associated with various medications.

Decades ago, Life Alert foreshadowed the value of wearable communication technology. Now the people behind the device best known by the slogan, "I've fallen and I can't get up!" offer a

smartphone app. Seniors in an emergency can reach for the Life Alert on the lanyard around their neck or the app on the smartphone at their waist.

Most surprisingly, researchers show smartphones helping seniors stay mentally sharp. According to a new study by the University of California San Francisco, adults ages 60 to 85 demonstrated increased cognition after playing NeuroRacer, a video game designed by neuroscientists (though not available commercially) for mobile devices.

During the one-month study, participants played the game for an hour a day, three days a week. In the game, players must "drive" a car on a road and respond to cues that pop up along the way while remaining on the course.

After a six-month hiatus from the game, participating seniors returned to play again, this time revealing drastic improvements in multitasking skills and memory enhancement. (You read that right. Memory enhancement. From a smartphone. Mmm.)

While picking out a smartphone for your grandmother—or any senior on your shopping list—remember to use the calendar app in your own smartphone to schedule a visit with them. Drive to see her (putting the phone down along the way, of course). There's no gift they'll appreciate more than your time. (And that time together means more to their health than any gift ever will.)

But while you're there, do the smart thing—put your smartphone down and give them the undivided attention they deserve and desire. Happy Holidays. ■

Most medical inquiries are best served by consulting your physician or a qualified specialist, and this "Ask Florence" is no substitute for professional exams and insights. To reach Ask Florence, please email AskFlorence@MartinCountyCurrents.com.

X

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Saturday, Jan. 25
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Eating healthy through sugar-laden holidays



**George
Kleine**
*The Right
Bite*

They're back! The holidays are back, and with them come those dietary dilemmas and challenges. How can you maintain a healthy eating plan when there are cookies on every desk, sweets at every turn and newspapers are filled with tempting recipes for "HOLIDAY TREATS"?

The key word in the phrase "healthy-eating plan" is not "healthy." It is "PLAN." It is always important to have a plan when trying to "eat healthy," but during the holidays, it is imperative.

The plan needs to be simple, realistic and inclusive. Once you decide to eliminate any specific food or food group you begin to feel deprived, and then to crave that food. In truth you can eat virtually anything you would like to eat. The key is not what you eat but HOW MUCH you eat. Success lies in CONTROL. Portion control and self control.

Be aware of not only what you eat, but portion size and "value." While it is

possible to eat whatever you feel like eating, and by staying within a controlled calorie count not gain weight, you will not improve your health. Equally; you can strictly limit yourself to "healthy" foods and feel cheated and unhappy.

I was recently introduced to the "HEALTHY PLATE" concept with great results. I have been able to reduce my weight, improve my health a great deal, and continue to enjoy virtually anything I want. I use a smaller-sized dinner plate than I used to. I use a brightly colored plate, which helps me see how large or small my portions are.

I plan my meals: I think about what my choices are and select foods that I LIKE. I don't eat something just because it is supposedly good for me or healthy. (Memories of the hated liver and onions when I was a kid!) I eat a fresh, cold crisp salad at least twice a day.

I eat S-L-O-W-L-Y while sitting down at the table or counter. I don't eat in the car or "on the run." Thoughtful eating is healthy eating. I divide my plate into quarters:

One quarter of the plate is a LEAN protein (chicken, fish, lean pork). One quarter is a grain (rice, quinoa, corn etc.). One HALF of the plate is non-starchy vegetables and fruits (a variety of veggies).

It is best to use a measuring spoon at

first to get adjusted to the proper portion size: veggies and fruits should be about a half cup each serving. Protein should be the size of a deck of cards or the palm of your hand. Starches and grains should be a half cup. Try to make at least half of your grain choices whole grains.

Here is my personal guide to good eating: Eat foods you like. Just eat less.

Make half of your plate fruits and veggies. Lean Protein. Add Dairy to at least two meals. **DO NOT SKIP MEALS.** Eat slowly; put your fork down between bites. Eat thoughtfully. Try new lean, healthy foods.

Don't forget dessert...fresh fruit, low cal sherbet or sorbet, or try fat-free yogurt. Drink water with every meal. Cold water is fine, but so is hot water; just drink plenty.

I discovered a good, easy recipe that would make an excellent dinner entrée for holiday guests or family get-togethers.

CHICKEN-ASPARAGUS ROLL UPS

Pre-heat oven to 375 degrees.
4 Whole Boneless Skinless
Chicken Breasts (6-8 oz. each)
2 Tablespoons Olive Oil
1 Tablespoon Chopped Garlic
1/2 Cup Grated Parmesan Cheese
2 teaspoons Mixed Fresh Herbs
(Oregano, Rosemary, Parsley)

2 Beefsteak Tomatoes,
Cut into 4 1/8 inch slices each
8 Asparagus Spears, halved
lengthwise then crosswise.

With a sharp knife split each breast in half along the center "line." Place each half between two pieces of plastic wrap and using a meat mallet or rolling pin to pound until about 3/8 inch thick. (You should have 8 thin pieces).

Heat oil in large skillet; add chicken and sauté with garlic until browned only on one side about 2 minutes. Discard garlic.

Transfer chicken to a baking sheet, browned side down, season with salt and pepper, sprinkle with herbs. Layer each piece with a Tomato slice and four asparagus pieces. Roll each piece up and secure with a toothpick. Sprinkle with cheese, bake in pre-heated oven for 15-20 minutes. Remove toothpicks. Serve hot. Enjoy! ■

George Kleine, a professional chef, writer and entrepreneur in Hobe Sound, recently lost a few tons of extra weight. He won't say how many pounds, but enough to make him an expert on healthy cooking and eating. We're delighted to offer his column in Martin County Currents.

Hot lunches, company of friends at senior meal sites in Martin

A hot, home-cooked lunch served among friends is being provided to seniors over age 60 at no charge from the Martin County Council on Aging. The cost of the meals, which provide one-third of the recommended daily nutritional needs for those age 60 and over, are underwritten by government grants, but donations are encouraged.

Four dining centers are currently operating in Martin County and are open from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. To pre-register or learn more, call the Council's Nutrition Services Department at 772-223-7826.

The meal sites include:

- Log Cabin Senior Center, Langford Park, 2369 NE Dixie Highway, Jensen Beach

- Salerno Southern Methodist Church, 4899 SE Ebbitide Ave., Port Salerno
- Stuart Recreation Center, 724 E 10th Street, Stuart

- Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church, 14789 Martin Luther King Blvd., Indiantown

If a senior is unable to drive to a meal site, Meals on Wheels can deliver. Call 772-223-7826 for more information. ■

New House of Refuge surfcam gives good views of surf, wave conditions

Beachgoers can now view ocean and river conditions at Hutchinson Island's House of Refuge with a new surfcam recently installed at the historic attraction at 301 SE MacArthur Blvd. in Stuart. The cam provides live 360-degree views up to one mile north and south on the Atlantic coast between Santa Lucea and Chastain beaches on Hutchinson Island.

Camera controls also offer viewers

the ability to see the conditions in the Indian River Lagoon.

The House of Refuge surfcam bridges the long stretch of coast between Jensen Beach and Bathtub Reef, the only other surfcam sites in Martin County.

"I use surfcams every day," says Frank Wacha Jr., owner of Kona Beach Cafe and an avid surfer, "and I'm excited to learn that there's a new one in Stuart. There's a nice break near the House of

Refuge and the cam will help me determine when and where to paddle out."

The cams also appeal to tourists, sailors, windsurfers, and anyone who wants to know beach conditions, and daily audio report on SurfGuru.com, which provides the service, gives wave heights, wind, weather and UV forecasts.

View the surfcam video feed at HouseofRefugeFL.org, or SurfGuru.com. ■

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Thirty knots of November's Northeast winds cause a surging Juno Beach coastline as a determined gull feeds on abundant sandfleas.



Stephen Gyland, president of Cod and Capers Seafood Market in North Palm Beach, and Pompano Rich showing off Rich's haul of silver nuggets.



Cod and Capers is not a typical seafood market, which is devoted to selling and serving only the freshest seafood from local fishermen. It also has a delightful array of coastal-themed trinkets and treasures for sale.

Welcoming the return of the silver bullets



**Rich
Vidulich**
*Pompano
Reporter*

Remarkable! Seems like forever with nothing to report but our dismal water conditions. It's no fun to report about everything BUT fishing.

And I'm so out of condition it's like my hands have gone arthritic with my "pisces cerebrum" going into aquatic rehab. After pretty much destroying my shoulder this past April, I was ready to throw away the whole premise of physically fishing again. Three non-rusting shoulder pins reattaching some detached rotator ligaments, 80 days in a sling 24/7, and 48 physical therapy sessions, and I've emerged to fish again.

Thank goodness I'm old and the government footed the \$68,000 bill. Add another 60 days in the gym and "Boom Shack A Lacka" and I can CAST! Not only that, I am now a threat to the pompano population. All right, sooooo where's the fishing report, you ask?

After 170 consecutive days of muck-infested Hobe Sound surf conditions, the "dust" settled. Mid-November pro-

vided water quality that emerged from the heavens. North Federal Beach provided every surf enthusiast with nice catches of pompano.

Hobe Sound Public was not to be denied and followed suit. Dead fleas, blanched, smelly shrimp, old clams, it did not matter. They bit anything, producing happy anglers with a bit of "SILVER LINING" in their buckets. The Dow Jones on the succulent whiting was on the upswing. Two days of blue green water (NOT from algae) was simply a short-lived phenomenon, but the local world was happy to feel the difference.

Now, big-time Nor'easters have displaced the happy, fishy waters with the remains of the St. Lucie River bottom. As we approached Thanksgiving, the seas were huge and colder air arrived. Sure, a lot of us could be miserable that we still have to co-exist with a very destructive rainy summer and a filthy ocean floor, but there were hopeful signs. The fish didn't give up on feeding at shoreline!

The beaches eroded to a small declaration of naturalness, but the sand fleas are calling it home. I'm always amazed at how Mother Nature's creatures somehow adapt to the seismic nuclear toxicity that we bury them in.

The beaches from Stuart to Ft. Pierce Inlet haven't fared so well. During No-

vember the ocean never cleaned up enough to catch pompano. Sure, there were good bluefish, jack crevalle and ladyfish catches, but those fish are not bothered by sand in their gills, as are Spanish mackerel and the silversides. The only way to surf fish proficiently is to search the coast.

An easier way is to Google Erdman Video Systems and study the beach cams. They are very current, and like the Jupiter Inlet cam, you can get a live stream. To make these cams work for you requires some additional work, though, if you want to be a much better angler. For example, it's 3 p.m. and your beach cam seems to show a really good-looking water color, and naturally you're ready to fish.

Take the ride to the cam location. See the beach yourself, and perhaps even take a picture of the water. Sometimes the cam pic denotes awesome-appearing water, but on beach arrival, you might determine the water is a murky green-gray and really not fishable. Download your photo and maintain a folder (if you're as nuts as I am) for future reference between what the cam shows and what it really is. After a few trips, you will discover this methodology is useful and somewhat exciting.

There are numerous factors that can misalign a cam recorder's visual aspect.

One is the angle of the sun, the cloud cover, and the mounting angle of the camera. Yep, I've actually gone to the 12th floor to see the camera itself, and enjoyed the best ocean view ever, bar none, as well as the Osprey family! Didn't bother the nest with a camera, just let them be. So cool.

And so is Stephen Gyland, president of Cod and Capers Seafood Market in North Palm Beach. He's a cool guy who gets great personal satisfaction in retailing the freshest seafood caught by local fishermen, which he's done for 30 years. I've personally delivered pompano to several fish wholesale houses, but have found a home in supplying the Caper's the past six years.

The retail display is just fun to look at, but the topper is the gourmet restaurant in the front. Yes, I'm going to tell you where they are: 1201 U.S. Highway 1 in North Palm Beach. Phone is 561-622-0994, or go to www.codandcapers.com for more info. I'm encouraging you to visit the Caper's, because I know they'll satisfy any of your seafood desires. ■

Rich Vidulich, a commercial pompano surf fisherman who traverses the beaches of Martin County and points north for his "golden nuggets," lives in Jupiter. Send comments or questions to Pompano@MartinCountyCurrents.com.



Staying engaged to protect our estuaries

River activist Evan Miller called for another rally Nov. 9, again at Phipps Park, which included a march to the St. Lucie Lock and Dam. The Lake Okeechobee discharges had ended, but about 200 marchers were no less adamant than the first 5,000 summer marchers about ensuring that the St. Lucie River and Indian River Lagoon no longer suffer from Lake O discharges. Miller called for citizens to undertake an intense email and letter writing campaign calling for Gov. Rick Scott and the Florida Legislature to live up to their promise of \$220 million for water projects. Photo: Harvey Eubank

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Photo: Out2MartinCounty.com

'Yes, Victoria, there *is* a Santa Claus'

The smile on this little girl's face as she tells Santa her wish list reveals the true wonder of Christmas. It is the reward received by organizers of the 13th Annual Kidz Christmas Party, the Women's Power Lunch Bunch, hosted by Jan's Place restaurant on Jensen Beach Blvd.. Sixty-two children from Hibiscus House and House of Hope were entertained by the Jensen Beach Elementary Choir, firefighters, a face painter, and lots of treats. "It was a heart-warming event," said Anne Schafer, president of the WPLB.